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JANUARY 11, 2025 • BILLBOARD.COM

JENNIE TAKES CONTROL

The Blackpink star brings her own dreams, and label, to life

+

GENRE NOW

FEATURING

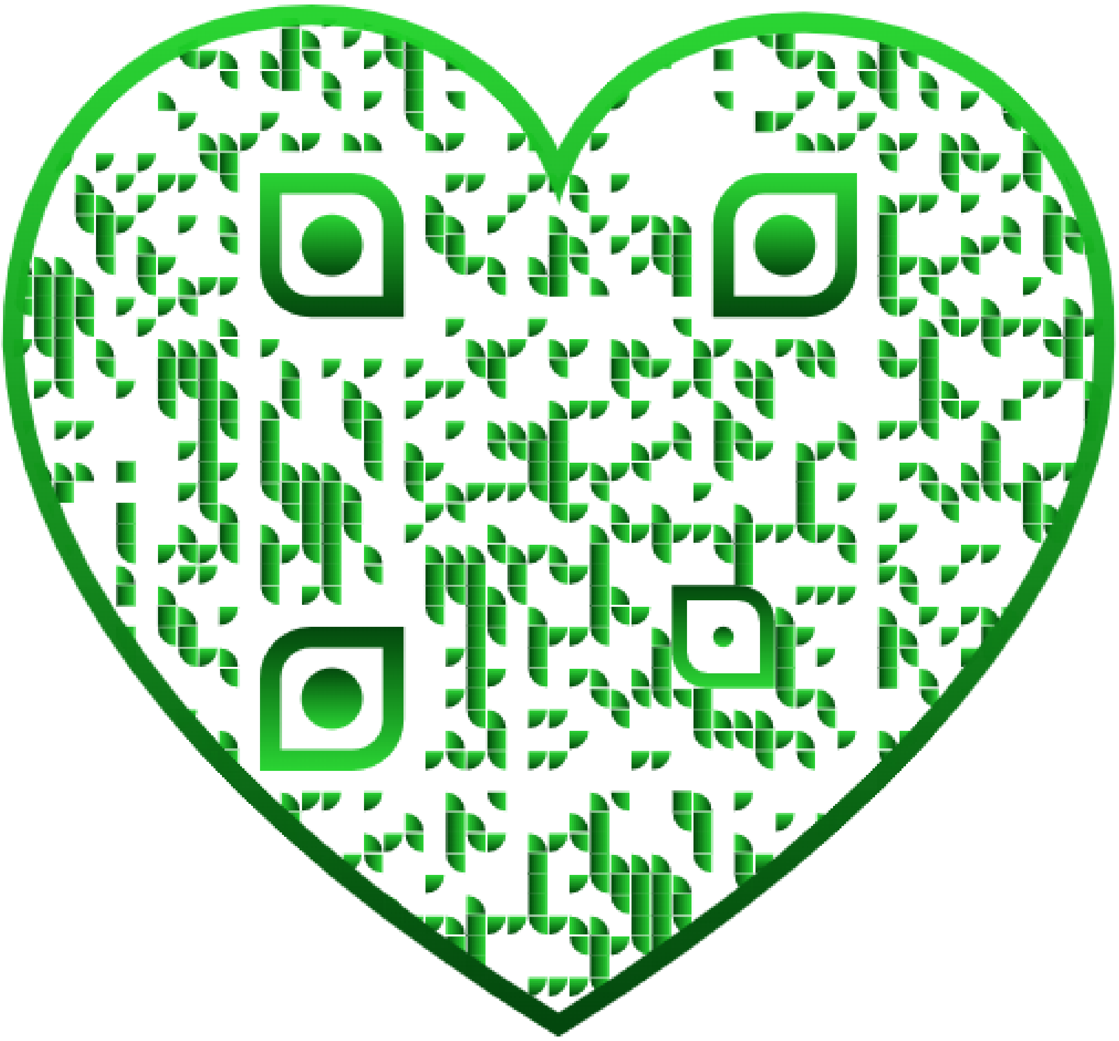
BigXthaPlug
Flawed Mangoes
Zach Top
Xavi

—

MANAGERS TO WATCH

—

QUARTER-CENTURY CHART CHAMPS



CONGRATULATIONS

TO OUR FRIEND
BRANDON CREED,
BILLBOARD'S
MANAGER
OF THE YEAR.

LOVE,
YOUR
ATLANTIC
FAMILY

contents

JAN. 11, 2025
VOLUME 137
NO. 1

ON THE COVER
Jennie photographed by Songyi Yoon on Oct. 25, 2024, in Seoul.

Jacquemus top, David Koma pants, AREA hat

THIS PAGE
Annakiki dress

TO OUR READERS
Billboard will publish its next issue on Jan. 25. For 24/7 music coverage, go to billboard.com.

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The world knows **Jennie** from Blackpink — but with the upcoming debut album she has long hoped for, she's finally really getting to know, and show, her true self.

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GENRE NOW
It's harder than ever for a new artist to break out, but young stars **BigXthaPlug**, **Flawed Mangoes**, **Zach Top** and **Xavi** are pushing their sounds forward — and creating new ones.

Congratulations
Brandon
on your well-deserved award.

Love from all your friends at Sony Music.

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From the 1900s to now, the world of Oz has bewitched Broadway, cast spells over musicians and dazzled silver screens — and *Billboard* has been there for every step of the yellow brick road.

Xavi photographed by
Jennifer McCord
on Dec. 3, 2024, in Los Angeles.

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Coldplay

Top Rock Touring Artist

Beyonce

Top Country Female Artist

Post Malone

Top Collaboration

feat. Morgan Wallen “I Had Some Help”

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DATA FOR WEEK OF 1.11.2025

Gaga and Mars

JOHN ESPARZA

‘Die With A Smile’ Leads At Last

BILLBOARD HOT 100

1

“Die With a Smile”
Lady Gaga & Bruno Mars

LAST WEEK	PEAK POSITION	WEEKS ON CHART
17	1	20

CLAIMING A WIN with a grin, Lady Gaga and Bruno Mars’ “Die With a Smile” hits No. 1 on the Billboard Hot 100.

In its 20th week on the chart, the ballad soars from No. 17 after it initially reached No. 2 for four weeks in November. All the titles in the Jan. 11-dated top 10 are returners to the region, a week after holiday songs decorated the entire tier — and dashed all the way through the top 16 spots — for the first time.

The single totaled 59.7 million radio airplay audience impressions (up 11% week over week), 27.1 million official streams (up 11%) and 6,000 sold (up 41%) in the United States Dec. 27, 2024-Jan. 2, 2025, according to Luminate. It also logs its first week at No. 1 on the Streaming Songs chart.

“Die With a Smile” becomes Gaga’s sixth Hot 100 No. 1 and Mars’ ninth. Highlighting her hit-making longevity, Gaga — who first led with “Just Dance” (featuring Colby O’Donis) a week shy of 16 years earlier — becomes only the third artist to have notched multiple No. 1s in three decades, as she now boasts two each in the 2000s, ’10s and ’20s. (She most recently led with “Rain on Me,” with Ariana Grande, for one week in June 2020.) Janet Jackson scored two No. 1s in the ’80s, six in the ’90s and two in the ’00s, while Michael Jackson earned two in the ’70s (apart from the Jackson 5), nine in the ’80s and two in the ’90s.

Meanwhile, Mars adds his 35th career week at No. 1 on the Hot 100, solely claiming the 10th-most time spent in the top spot. —GARY TRUST

Hot 100

2 WKS. AGO	LAST WEEK	THIS WEEK	Title PRODUCER (SONGWRITER)	Artist IMPRINT/PROMOTION LABEL	PEAK POS.	WKS. ON CHART
6	17	1	**#1 for 1 WEEK** **Die With A Smile** BRUNO MARS,D'MILE,LADY GAGA,ANDREW WATT (BRUNO MARS,S.G.GERMANOTTA,D.EMILE II, J.E.FAUNTLEROY II,A.WOTMAN)	**Lady Gaga & Bruno Mars** STREAMLINE/INTERSCOPE/ATLANTIC/ICLG	1	20
13	24	2	**SAL** **STM** **A Bar Song (Tipsy)** S.COOK,N.SASTRY (C.O.CHIBUEZE,S.C.COOK,N.SASTRY,J.JONES,J.A.KENT,M.A.WILLIAMS)	**Shaboozey** AMERICAN DOGWOOD/EMPIRE/MAGNOLIA MUSIC	1	38
18	28	3	**Birds Of A Feather** FINNEAS (B.E.O'CONNELL,F.B.O'CONNELL)	**Billie Eilish** DARKROOM/INTERSCOPE/ICLG	2	33
RE-ENTRY		4	**Lose Control** INFAMOUS,AMMO,J.BUNETTA (J.E.COLEMAN,J.C.BUNETTA,M.RODRIGUEZ-DIAZ,MIKKY EKKO,J.C.DIMSDALE)	**Teddy Swims** SWIMS INT./WARNER	1	72
22	34	5	**APT.** BRUNO MARS,CIRKUT,O.FEDI,R.CHAHAYED (R.PARK,A.R.ALLEN,C.B.BROWN,R.CHAHAYED,O.FEDI, P.M.LAWRENCE II,BRUNO MARS,T.M.THOMAS,H.R.WALTER,M.D.CHAPMAN,N.CHINN)	**ROSE & Bruno Mars** THE BLACK LABEL/ATLANTIC	5	11
19	33	6	**That's So True** G.ABRAMS,A.DESSNER,J.BUNETTA (G.ABRAMS,A.HOBERT)	**Gracie Abrams** INTERSCOPE/ICLG	6	11
11	27	7	**Luther** SOUNWAVE,J.M.ANTONOFF,ROSELILAH,M-TECH,SCOTT BRIDGEWAY,K.WASHINGTON (K.L.DUCKWORTH,S.I.ROWE,A.BOGGS,S.J.DEW)	**Kendrick Lamar & SZA** PGLANG/INTERSCOPE/ICLG	3	6
29	47	8	**I Had Some Help** L.BELL,CHARLIE HANDSOME,HOSKINS (A.R.POST,M.C.WALLEN,L.B.BELL,CHARLIE HANDSOME,E.K.SMITH, J.J.HOSKINS,C.P.WALTERS,A.G.GORLEY)	**Post Malone Featuring Morgan Wallen** MERCURY/BIG LOUD/REPUBLIC	1	34
30	46	9	**AIR** **Espresso** J.BUNETTA (S.A.CARPENTER,J.C.BUNETTA,A.R.ALLEN,S.N.JONES)	**Sabrina Carpenter** ISLAND/REPUBLIC	3	38
26	41	10	**Taste** J.H.RYAN,J.BUNETTA,I.KIRKPATRICK (S.A.CARPENTER,J.H.RYAN,JULIA MICHAELS,A.R.ALLEN,I.KIRKPATRICK)	**Sabrina Carpenter** ISLAND/REPUBLIC	2	19
12	32	11	**TV Off** MUSTARD,S.MOMBERGER,SOUNWAVE,J.M.ANTONOFF,K.WASHINGTON (K.L.DUCKWORTH)	**Kendrick Lamar Featuring Lefty Gunplay** PGLANG/INTERSCOPE/ICLG	2	6
RE-ENTRY		12	**Beautiful Things** E.BLAIR (B.BOONE,E.BLAIR,J.L.LARSEN)	**Benson Boone** NIGHT STREET/WARNER	2	49
38	53	13	**Love Somebody** J.MOI,CHARLIE HANDSOME (M.C.WALLEN,J.BYRON,A.G.GORLEY,J.K.HINDLIN,E.LOELV,CHARLIE HANDSOME, N.J.GALE,M.SORBARA,S.C.FRANK,S.F.R.MASTROIANNI,Y.GRUZMAN)	**Morgan Wallen** MERCURY/BIG LOUD/REPUBLIC	1	11
RE-ENTRY		14	**Too Sweet** BEKON,PETE G,CHAKRA,A.HOZIER-BYRNE (A.HOZIER-BYRNE,D.TANNENBAUM,P.GONZALES, D.N.KRIEGER,S.A.GHEMAN,S.D.JOHNSON,T.R.MEHLENBACHER)	**Hozier** RUBYWORKS/COLUMBIA	1	40
32	51	15	**Timeless** P.L.WILLIAMS,OJIVOLTA,M.G.DEAN,TWISCO (A.M.TESFAYE,J.T.CARTER,P.L.WILLIAMS,M.WILLIAMS, R.I.CUBINA,T.SHARRIEFF,K.HOOD,D.CHISOLM,BLESSED,J.MORGAN,M.G.DEAN)	**The Weeknd & Playboi Carti** XO/REPUBLIC	3	14
20	44	16	**Squabble Up** KENDRICK LAMAR,SOUNWAVE,SCOTT BRIDGEWAY,J.M.ANTONOFF (K.L.DUCKWORTH)	**Kendrick Lamar** PGLANG/INTERSCOPE/ICLG	1	6
RE-ENTRY		17	**Good Luck, Babe!** D.NIGRO (K.R.AMSTUTZ,D.L.NIGRO,J.D.TRANTER)	**Chappell Roan** KRA/AMUSEMENT/ISLAND/REPUBLIC	4	38
34	52	18	**Sticky** TYLER, THE CREATOR (T.G.OKONMA,G.WOODS,D.M.CARTER, JR.,J.N.WHERRY,R.ZAMOR,A.J.BOLTON, D.A.DUVERNE,T.Z.MOSLEY,D.D.BROWN,E.L.WILLIAMS JR.,J.F.JONES,T.CLAYTON,Z.A.WALLACE)	**Tyler, The Creator Featuring GloRilla, Sexyy Red & Lil Wayne** COLUMBIA	10	10
RE-ENTRY		19	**Stargazing** P.FENN (M.SMITH,P.J.FENN,J.FINKELSTEIN)	**Myles Smith** IT'S OKAY TO FEEL/RCA	19	33
RE-ENTRY		20	**Not Like Us** MUSTARD,S.MOMBERGER (K.L.DUCKWORTH)	**Kendrick Lamar** PGLANG/INTERSCOPE/ICLG	1	34

Go to the Chart Beat section of billboard.com for complete charts coverage.

SOPHIE JONES

HOT 100

25

"Messy"
Lola Young

Lola Young notches her first top 40 Billboard Hot 100 hit as a lead artist, and second overall, as "Messy" bounds from No. 61 to No. 25 on the Jan. 11-dated chart. In addition to its growing popularity on TikTok, the song drew 12.5 million official streams (up 22% week over week), 1.4 million in all-format radio airplay audience (up 37%) and 3,000 sold (up 43%) in the United States in the week ending Jan. 2, according to Luminate.

The track outpaces the South London native's other current Hot 100 hit, Tyler, The Creator's "Like Him," on which she's featured. The collaboration, which rises 66-37, reached No. 29 on the Nov. 16, 2024-dated chart a week after it became Young's first entry on the chart. It's from Tyler, The Creator's album *Chromakopia*, which led the Billboard 200 for three weeks in November.

Young, who crowned the Emerging Artists list for two weeks beginning Dec. 28, concurrently hits a new No. 19 high on Top Rock & Alternative Albums with "Messy" parent set *This Wasn't Meant for You Anyway*. The album, released in June, earned 11,000 equivalent album units (up 21%) in the latest tracking week.

The 24-year-old broke through in the United Kingdom in 2021 with her cover of "Together in Electric Dreams," originally a hit by Giorgio Moroder and Philip Oakey from the 1984 sci-fi rom-com *Electric Dreams*.

"What I'm realizing about myself as an artist is that I'm not about the glitz and the glam — I don't scream 'Hollywood,' " Young, who began writing songs at age 11, told *Billboard* in November. "For a long time, I wanted to represent this ideal of Westernized beauty — but then I realized I'm not that. I now choose to give realness and truth. I've got a bit of a belly out, I fucking swear a bunch, and I have fun. And that's what people are resonating with.

"A lot of strings were being pulled when I was starting out. It all felt fake. It felt forced," she recalled. "This isn't about blaming anybody, but nothing was really clicking at the time. Now I have creative control alongside an understanding of who I am and where I want to go."

—GARY TRUST

HOT 100 FIRST-TIMERS

Artists who have recently made their initial appearances on the chart

ARTIST	SONG	DEBUT POSITION	DEBUT DATE
Sam Barber feat. Avery Anna	"Indigo"	98	Dec. 21
Dylan Marlowe	"Boys Back Home" with Dylan Scott	75	Jan. 11
Ty Myers	"Ends of the Earth"	94	Jan. 11

AIRPLAY, SALES AND STREAMING DATA COMPILED BY LUMINATE
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ISLAND
Def Jam recordings
REPUBLIC COLLECTIVE
Mercury RECORDS
republic records

BILLBOARD 200

17

Ed Sheeran

+-=÷x (Tour Collection)

The best-of set reaches the top 20 for the first time, marking his eighth top 20-charting album, following its deluxe reissue on Dec. 27 with a raft of bonus live tracks.

37

Beyoncé

Cowboy Carter

After her Netflix NFL Christmas Gameday halftime performance and the 13-minute show's debut as a stand-alone program on Netflix and YouTube (Dec. 27), the album returns to the top 40 for the first time since July.

107

BING CROSBY
ULTIMATE CHRISTMAS

Bing Crosby

Ultimate Christmas

A week ago, there were 45 holiday titles on the chart. This issue, just six dot the list, led by Crosby's *Ultimate Christmas*, which also reaches No. 1 on the Top Holiday Albums chart.

1

SZA

SOS

SZA's 2-year-old *SOS* secures a 12th nonconsecutive week atop the Billboard 200, continuing to profit from its deluxe reissue on Dec. 20, 2024, with 15 additional tracks. The set surged 15-1 on the Jan. 4 chart following the reissue, dubbed *SOS Deluxe: LANA* (pictured left). All versions of the album, old and new, are combined for tracking and charting.

SOS earned 130,000 equivalent album units in the United States in the week ending Jan. 2 (down 27%), according to Luminate.

With a 12th week at No. 1, *SOS* has the longest stay atop the chart for an R&B/hip-hop album by a woman, or an R&B album by a woman, since Whitney Houston's self-titled set tallied 14 weeks at No. 1 in 1986. (Honorable mention to the Houston-led soundtrack to *The Bodyguard*, which led for 20 nonconsecutive weeks in 1992-93. The 12-track album contains six songs by Houston and six songs by other artists.) —KEITH CAULFIELD

Billboard 200

2 WKS. AGO	LAST WEEK	THIS WEEK	Artist IMPRINT/DISTRIBUTING LABEL	Title	PEAK POS.	WKS. ON CHART
15	①	1	#1 for 12 WEEKS **SZA** TOP DAWG/RCA	**SOS**	1	108
2	5	2	**Kendrick Lamar** PGLANG/INTERSCOPE/ICLG	**GNX**	1	6
4	12	3	**Sabrina Carpenter** ISLAND/REPUBLIC	**Short n' Sweet**	1	19
7	8	4	**Cynthia Erivo, Ariana Grande & Various Artists** UNIVERSAL STUDIOS/VERVE/VLG/REPUBLIC	**Wicked: The Soundtrack**	2	6
8	14	5	**Billie Eilish** DARKROOM/INTERSCOPE/ICLG	**Hit Me Hard And Soft**	2	33
3	7	6	**Taylor Swift** REPUBLIC	**The Tortured Poets Department**	1	37
9	16	7	**Chappell Roan** KRA/AMUSEMENT/ISLAND/REPUBLIC	**The Rise And Fall Of A Midwest Princess**	2	41
18	29	⑧	**Morgan Wallen** BIG LOUD/MERCURY/REPUBLIC	**One Thing At A Time**	1	96
13	25	9	**Gracie Abrams** INTERSCOPE/ICLG	**The Secret Of Us**	2	28
14	27	10	**Tyler, The Creator** COLUMBIA	**CHROMAKOPIA**	1	10
22	31	11	**Noah Kahan** MERCURY/REPUBLIC	**Stick Season**	2	110
21	32	⑫	**ROSE** THE BLACK LABEL/ATLANTIC/AG	**Rosie**	3	4
①	13	13	**Stray Kids** JYP/IMPERIAL/REPUBLIC	**Hop**	1	3
41	46	⑭	**Post Malone** MERCURY/REPUBLIC	**F-1 Trillion**	1	20
33	44	⑮	**Morgan Wallen** BIG LOUD/REPUBLIC	**Dangerous: The Double Album**	1	208
29	33	16	**Charli xcx** ATLANTIC/AG	**Brat**	3	30
99	90	⑰	**Ed Sheeran** GINGERBREAD MAN/ASYLUM/ATLANTIC/AG	**+-=÷x (Tour Collection)**	17	12
34	41	18	**Rod Wave** ALAMO	**Last Lap**	2	12
45	52	19	**Tito Double P** DOUBLE P	**Incomodo**	11	19
40	36	20	**Jelly Roll** BAILEE & BUDDY/STONEY CREEK/BMG/REPUBLIC	**Beautifully Broken**	1	12

SALES AND STREAMING DATA COMPILED BY LUMINATE

BILLBOARD 200: THE WEEK'S MOST POPULAR ALBUMS, BASED ON MULTIMETRIC CONSUMPTION, BLENDING TRADITIONAL ALBUM SALES, STREAMING-EQUIVALENT ALBUMS AND TRACK-EQUIVALENT ALBUMS, AS COMPILED BY LUMINATE. SEE CHARTS LEGEND ON BILLBOARD.COM FOR COMPLETE RULES AND EXPLANATIONS. © 2025 BILLBOARD MEDIA LLC AND LUMINATE INC. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED.

CONGRATULATIONS
JARED COTTER & ABAS PAUTI
WHAT A HELL OF A YEAR IT'S BEEN!
EMPIRE
AD

GILBERT FLORES FOR VARIETY

GLOBAL 200

89

"Defying Gravity"
Cynthia Erivo featuring
Ariana Grande

WITH AUDIENCES off to see the Wizard, and Elphaba and Glinda, two of the *Wicked* franchise's signature songs have become *Billboard* chart hits.

Wicked, which adapts the stage musical of the same name that premiered in 2003, opened in North American movie theaters on Nov. 22, 2024, and has reportedly made an estimated $681 million in sales worldwide through Jan. 5.

Meanwhile, the film's soundtrack, billed to *Wicked* stars Cynthia Erivo and Ariana Grande (above left and right, respectively), as well as other artists, has spent its first six weeks at No. 1 on *Billboard*'s Soundtracks chart and in the Billboard 200's top 10.

As movie and music fans immerse themselves in *Wicked*, two of its most beloved songs have hit multiple charts: Grande's "Popular" and Erivo's "Defying Gravity" (featuring Grande). The former jumps 160-89 on the Billboard Global 200 with 14.6 million official streams and 3,000 downloads sold worldwide Dec. 27-Jan. 2, according to Luminate.

Plus, the tracks have scaled radio rankings: "Popular" has hit respective highs of Nos. 25 and 26 on Mainstream Top 40 and Adult Top 40. "Defying Gravity" has reached Nos. 36 and 33 on the same charts.

Historically, songs from musicals have been relatively few and far between on radio, despite their built-in familiarity. Still, says Alex Tear, SiriusXM/Pandora vp of music programming, "We've never been focused on 'typical.' We're focused on our listeners' passions and keeping pace, in addition to being predictive of their favorites."

IHeartMedia chief programming officer Tom Poleman agrees. "It's a pop culture moment for our listeners," he says. " 'Popular' and 'Defying Gravity' are two of the biggest songs of the moment. It came down to the popularity, no pun intended, of this movie."

—GARY TRUST

Global 200

2 WKS. AGO	LAST WEEK	THIS WEEK	Title	Artist	PEAK POS.	WKS. ON CHART
1	5	1	**#1 for 10 WEEKS** **APT.**	ROSE & Bruno Mars	1	11
4	10	2	**Die With A Smile**	Lady Gaga & Bruno Mars	1	20
7	20	3	**Birds Of A Feather**	Billie Eilish	1	33
⑨	21	4	**That's So True**	Gracie Abrams	4	11
18	40	⑤	**GG** **Espresso**	Sabrina Carpenter	1	38
13	32	6	**Luther**	Kendrick Lamar & SZA	4	6
19	43	7	**Beautiful Things**	Benson Boone	1	50
㉝	56	⑧	**Messy**	Lola Young	8	5
24	48	9	**Lose Control**	Teddy Swims	4	68
25	46	10	**Who**	Jimin	1	24
41	65	⑪	**A Bar Song (Tipsy)**	Shaboozey	3	38
26	52	12	**Timeless**	The Weeknd & Playboi Carti	3	14
29	63	13	**Good Luck, Babe!**	Chappell Roan	5	38
36	54	14	**Si Antes Te Hubiera Conocido**	Karol G	5	28
34	64	15	**Taste**	Sabrina Carpenter	2	19
27	60	16	**Sailor Song**	Gigi Perez	10	19
28	62	17	**Wildflower**	Billie Eilish	11	33
21	58	18	**TV Off**	Kendrick Lamar Featuring Lefty Gunplay	5	6
46	75	19	**Please Please Please**	Sabrina Carpenter	1	30
52	77	20	**Too Sweet**	Hozier	1	41

STREAMING AND SALES DATA COMPILED BY LUMINATE

BILLBOARD GLOBAL 200: THE WEEK'S MOST POPULAR SONGS BASED ON STREAMING AND SALES ACTIVITY FROM OVER 200 TERRITORIES AROUND THE WORLD — INCLUDING THE UNITED STATES — AS TRACKED BY LUMINATE. THE RANKING IS BASED ON A WEIGHTED FORMULA INCORPORATING OFFICIAL-ONLY STREAMS ON BOTH SUBSCRIPTION AND AD-SUPPORTED TIERS OF LEADING AUDIO AND VIDEO MUSIC SERVICES, PLUS DOWNLOAD SALES FROM TOP MUSIC RETAILERS ACROSS THE GLOBE. SEE CHARTS LEGEND ON BILLBOARD.COM FOR COMPLETE RULES AND EXPLANATIONS. © 2025 BILLBOARD MEDIA LLC AND LUMINATE INC. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED.

DYLAN: MICHAEL OCHS ARCHIVES/GETTY IMAGES. WALLEN: MATT PASKERT. VEGA: ROGELIO TRAPERO/MG ENTERTAINMENT PR.

ARTIST 100

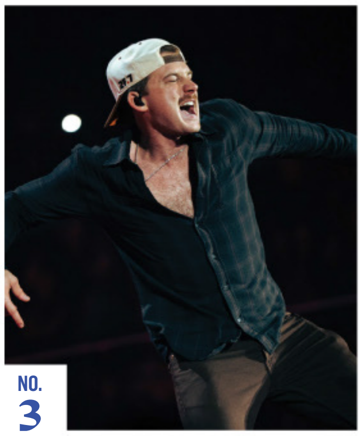
55

BOB DYLAN

WEEKS ON CHART

18

Following the U.S. release of the Timothée Chalamet-starring Bob Dylan biopic *A Complete Unknown* on Dec. 25, on-demand official streams of the folk-rock icon's catalog grew 74% domestically in the week ending Jan. 2, according to Luminate, bounding from 11.6 million to 20.2 million. —KEITH CAULFIELD



NO.
3

Wallen's New Reason To 'Smile'

"Smile," which Morgan Wallen co-wrote, rang in the new year with a midnight release and sold 13,000 downloads through Jan. 2. The ballad launches at No. 1 on both the Country Digital Song Sales and all-genre Digital Song Sales charts, where it's his 14th and eighth leader, respectively. The single drew 4.7 million official U.S. streams and 1.3 million in all-format airplay audience and opens at No. 5 on Hot Country Songs, becoming Wallen's 30th top 10. Plus, it starts at No. 54 on Country Airplay, where Wallen also bullets at No. 3 with "Love Somebody." —JIM ASKER

NO.
95

Vega Goes Reggaetón

Netón Vega debuts on the Artist 100 at No. 95, boosted by his new single, "Loco." His first venture into reggaetón, the track roars 18-2 on the Hot Latin Songs chart to become his fourth top 10 and tie his best rank. The Mexican singer-songwriter (from La Paz, Baja California Sur) known more so far for *corridos* is set to release his debut album, *De Mi Vida Mi Muerte*, on Jan. 20 (his birthday). "Loco" registered 8 million official U.S. streams (up 166%) Dec. 27-Jan. 2, giving Vega his second No. 1 on Latin Streaming Songs. —PAMELA BUSTIOS

Artist 100

2 WKS. AGO	LAST WEEK	THIS WEEK	Artist	IMPRINT/LABEL	PEAK POS.	WKS. ON CHART
12	②	1	**#1 for 2 WEEKS** **SZA**	TOP DAWG/RCA	1	279
3	4	2	**Kendrick Lamar**	PGLANG/INTERSCOPE/ICLG	1	470
6	10	③	**Morgan Wallen**	BIG LOUD/MERCURY/REPUBLIC	1	304
2	1	4	**Taylor Swift**	REPUBLIC	1	545
4	3	5	**Sabrina Carpenter**	ISLAND/REPUBLIC	1	57
5	9	6	**Billie Eilish**	DARKROOM/INTERSCOPE/ICLG	1	324
8	12	7	**Tyler, The Creator**	COLUMBIA	1	185
10	13	8	**Chappell Roan**	KRA/AMUSEMENT/ISLAND/REPUBLIC	1	38
17	24	⑨	**Bruno Mars**	ATLANTIC/AG	1	527
14	22	10	**Zach Bryan**	BELTING BRONCO/WARNER	1	138
20	27	11	**Teddy Swims**	SWIMS INT./WARNER	7	69
15	21	12	**Jelly Roll**	BAILEE & BUDDY/STONEY CREEK/BMG/REPUBLIC	1	129
18	28	13	**Shaboozey**	AMERICAN DOGWOOD/EMPIRE	8	38
25	34	⑭	**Luke Combs**	RIVER HOUSE/COLUMBIA NASHVILLE/SMN	1	409
16	31	⑮	**Gracie Abrams**	INTERSCOPE/ICLG	2	30
9	7	16	**Ariana Grande**	REPUBLIC	1	474
28	33	⑰	**Post Malone**	MERCURY/REPUBLIC	1	445
①	19	18	**Stray Kids**	JYP/IMPERIAL/REPUBLIC	1	83
32	39	⑲	**The Weeknd**	XO/REPUBLIC	1	495
30	29	20	**Hozier**	RUBYWORKS/COLUMBIA	3	154

AIRPLAY, SALES AND STREAMING DATA COMPILED BY LUMINATE

BILLBOARD ARTIST 100: THE WEEK'S MOST POPULAR ARTISTS ACROSS ALL GENRES, RANKED BY ALBUM AND TRACK SALES AS MEASURED BY LUMINATE, RADIO AIRPLAY AUDIENCE IMPRESSIONS AS MEASURED BY LUMINATE AND STREAMING ACTIVITY DATA FROM ONLINE MUSIC SOURCES TRACKED BY LUMINATE. SEE CHARTS LEGEND ON BILLBOARD.COM FOR COMPLETE RULES AND EXPLANATIONS.

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NO. 1

Lamar's Triple Crown

After chart triumphs in 2024, Kendrick Lamar extends his supremacy into the early stages of 2025 with the top three titles on the Hot Rap Songs chart for a sixth consecutive week. On the current ranking, "Luther," a collaboration with SZA, leads for a fourth week, while former one-week champs "TV Off" (featuring Lefty Gunplay) and "Squabble Up" are at Nos. 2 and 3, respectively.

In addition to his current six-week streak of owning the top three spots, Lamar achieved the same feat three times in 2024 with "Not Like Us," "Euphoria" and "Like That," a collaboration with Future and Metro Boomin. The combined total makes the superstar the first artist to occupy Nos. 1, 2 and 3 on Hot Rap Songs for nine weeks. He breaks a tie with Drake, who scored the trifecta on eight occasions: five weeks in 2011, two in 2022 and one in 2023. —TREVOR ANDERSON

Hot Rap Songs

LAST WEEK	THIS WEEK	Title IMPRINT/PROMOTION LABEL	Artist	WKS. ON CHART
1	1	#1 for 4 WEEKS **Luther** PGLANG/INTERSCOPE/ICLG	**Kendrick Lamar & SZA**	6
2	2	**TV Off** PGLANG/INTERSCOPE/ICLG	**Kendrick Lamar Featuring Lefty Gunplay**	6
3	3	**Squabble Up** PGLANG/INTERSCOPE/ICLG	**Kendrick Lamar**	6
4	4	**Sticky** COLUMBIA	**Tyler, The Creator Featuring GloRilla, Sexyy Red & Lil Wayne**	10
5	5	**Whatchu Kno About Me** CMG/INTERSCOPE/ICLG	**GloRilla & Sexyy Red**	12
6	6	**Hey Now** PGLANG/INTERSCOPE/ICLG	**Kendrick Lamar Featuring Dody6**	6
7	7	**Help Me** FREEBANDZ/EPIC	**Real Boston Richey**	24
12	8	**No Pole** CACTUS JACK/ATLANTIC	**Don Toliver**	8
9	9	**Empty Out Your Pockets** GRADE A/INTERSCOPE/ICLG	**Juice WRLD**	5
8	10	**Wacced Out Murals** PGLANG/INTERSCOPE/ICLG	**Kendrick Lamar**	6

NO. 1

Three Days Grace's Reunion Ruler

Three Days Grace notches its 18th No. 1 on *Billboard*'s Mainstream Rock Airplay chart — and its first since 2013 featuring vocals from original frontman Adam Gontier — with "Mayday." The band moves within one spot of the all-time No. 1 record on the chart, which began in 1981, behind Shinedown's 19 leaders.

Of Three Days Grace's 18 Mainstream Rock Airplay No. 1s, the group earned its first 11 with Gontier, beginning with "Just Like You" in 2004. Following his 2013 departure, the band racked up six leaders with vocalist Matt Walst, starting in 2014 with "Painkiller." "Mayday" is the first single since Gontier rejoined the band, with him and Walst trading vocals on it.

"Mayday" is currently a stand-alone single, as Three Days Grace is recording its eighth studio album and first since 2022's *Explosions*. The new set will mark Gontier's first with the band since 2012's *Transit of Venus*. —KEVIN RUTHERFORD

Mainstream Rock Airplay

LAST WEEK	THIS WEEK	Title IMPRINT/PROMOTION LABEL	Artist	WKS. ON CHART
2	1	#1 for 1 WEEK **Mayday** RCA	**Three Days Grace**	6
1	2	**Awaken** BENJAMIN BURNLEY/BMG	**Breaking Benjamin**	11
3	3	**Heavy Is The Crown** MACHINE SHOP/WARNER	**Linkin Park**	11
4	4	**What Remains** MNRK HEAVY/MNRK	**Pop Evil**	20
5	5	**Bad Guy** EPITAPH	**Falling In Reverse Featuring Saraya**	14
6	6	**Detroit** JOHN VARVATOS/BIG MACHINE	**Badflower**	22
7	7	**Black Butterfly** NAPALM	**Scott Stapp**	24
8	8	**Stuck In My Head** EPITAPH	**Sleep Theory**	18
9	9	**Liar** BAILEE & BUDDY/STONEY CREEK/BMG/REPUBLIC	**Jelly Roll**	20
10	10	**Bobby Sox** REPRISE/WARNER	**Green Day**	14

LAMAR: ANDRE D. WAGNER. THREE DAYS GRACE: MATT BARNES.

AIRPLAY, SALES AND STREAMING DATA COMPILED BY LUMINATE HOT RAP SONGS: THE WEEK'S MOST POPULAR CURRENT RAP SONGS ACROSS ALL GENRES, RANKED BY STREAMING ACTIVITY DATA BY ONLINE MUSIC SOURCES TRACKED BY LUMINATE, RADIO AIRPLAY AUDIENCE IMPRESSIONS AS MEASURED BY MEDIABASE AND SALES DATA AS COMPILED BY LUMINATE. MAINSTREAM ROCK AIRPLAY: THE WEEK'S MOST POPULAR SONGS RANKED BY MAINSTREAM ROCK RADIO AIRPLAY DETECTIONS, AS MEASURED BY MEDIABASE AND PROVIDED BY LUMINATE. STATIONS ARE ELECTRONICALLY MONITORED 24 HOURS A DAY, SEVEN DAYS A WEEK. SEE CHARTS LEGEND ON BILLBOARD.COM FOR COMPLETE RULES AND EXPLANATIONS. © 2025 BILLBOARD MEDIA LLC AND LUMINATE INC. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED.

MUFASA: COURTESY OF DISNEY

NO. 8

‘Brother’ Boosts *Mufasa*

Mufasa: The Lion King moves into the top 10 on the Soundtracks chart, clawing its way 21-8 in its second week on the list. The companion album to the film of the same name surges up the ranking largely thanks to streaming activity of the set’s “I Always Wanted a Brother.” It earned 7,000 equivalent album units in the United States in the week ending Jan. 2 (up 64%), according to Luminate, with streaming activity accounting for 79% of that sum.

“I Always Wanted a Brother” — which has become a viral meme on social media where users create clips set to the title lyric — generated 3.1 million on-demand official streams during the tracking week (the most streamed song on the album and 39% of the album’s total streams).

Mufasa: The Lion King is the latest film in Disney’s *Lion King* franchise. The soundtrack to 1994’s original animated movie led the all-genre Billboard 200 for 10 weeks in 1994-95 and reenters Soundtracks at No. 23 this issue. —KEITH CAULFIELD

Soundtracks

LAST WEEK	THIS WEEK	**Artist** IMPRINT/DISTRIBUTING LABEL	**Title**	WKS. ON CHART
1	1	**#1 for 6 WEEKS** **Cynthia Erivo, Ariana Grande & Various Artists** UNIVERSAL STUDIOS/VERVE/VLG/REPUBLIC	**Wicked: The Soundtrack**	6
4	2	**Soundtrack** NETFLIX/RIOT GAMES	**Arcane League Of Legends: Season Two**	6
7	③	**Soundtrack** UNIVERSAL PICTURES/ATLANTIC/AG	**Twisters: The Album**	24
10	④	**Soundtrack** WALT DISNEY	**Moana**	424
②	5	**Soundtrack** FANTASY/CRAFT/CONCORD	**A Charlie Brown Christmas (Vince Guaraldi Trio)**	221
12	⑥	**Soundtrack** WALT DISNEY	**Moana 2**	6
⑧	7	**Soundtrack** WALT DISNEY	**Tim Burton’s The Nightmare Before Christmas**	87
㉑	⑧	**Soundtrack** WALT DISNEY	**Mufasa: The Lion King**	2
15	9	**Soundtrack** MATTEL/WATERTOWER/ATLANTIC/AG	**Barbie: The Album**	76
13	10	**Soundtrack** WALT DISNEY	**Frozen: The Songs**	280

CHART CHANGES TO TAKE EFFECT JAN. 18

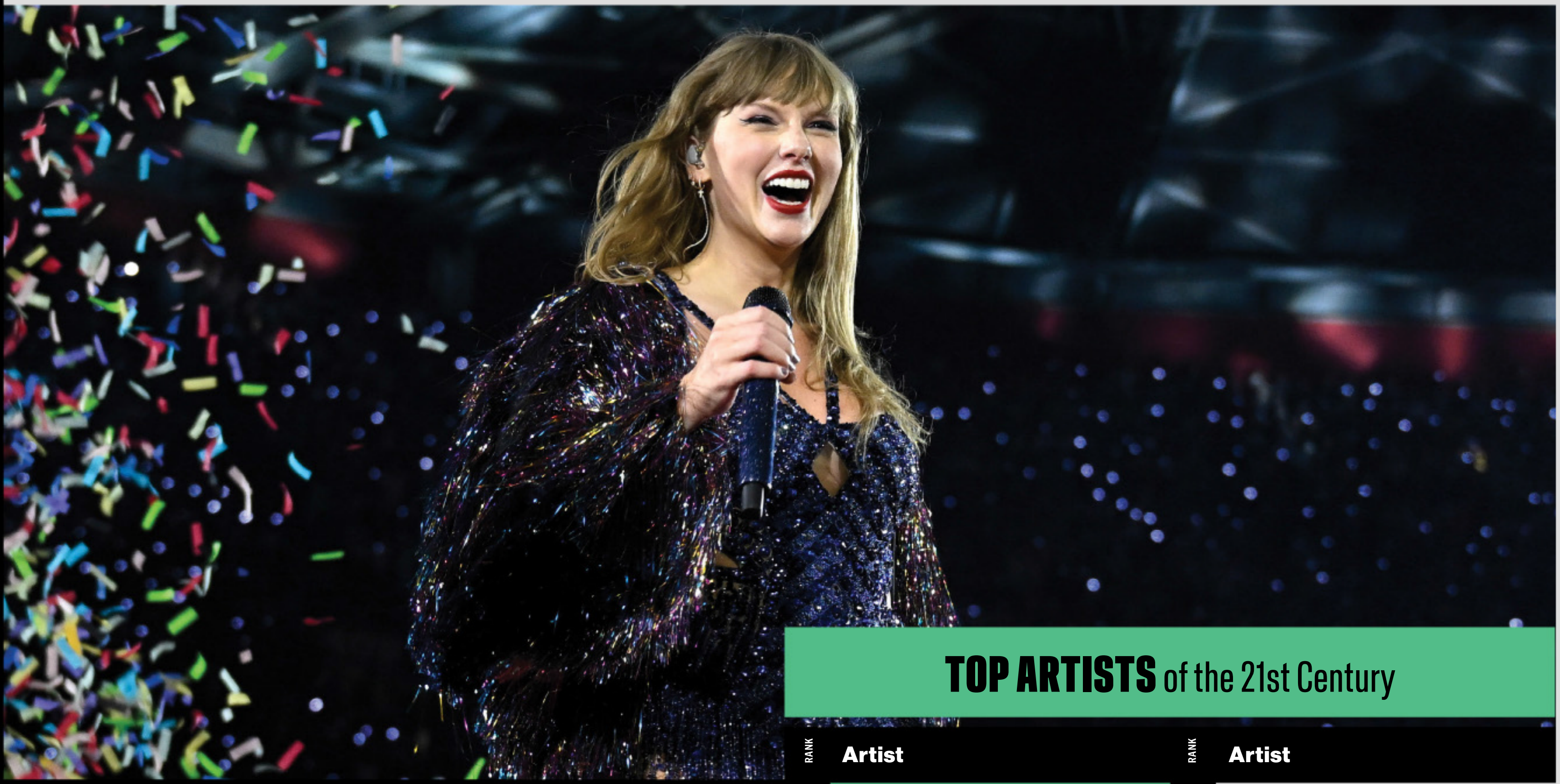
Commencing with the *Billboard* charts dated Jan. 18, reflecting the Luminate tracking week ending Jan. 9 (the first tracking week of the 2025 calendar year), six long-standing album genre charts will transition from sales-only rankings to consumption-based tallies and expand their depths. Three album genre charts that were already consumption-based will also increase their depths. (Consumption-based album charts rank titles by equivalent album units, blending traditional album sales, streaming-equivalent album units and track-equivalent album units.)

In addition, the Heatseekers Albums chart, which ranks the most popular albums by new and developing acts, will be retired, beginning with the Jan. 18 ranking. *Billboard* will continue monitoring new and developing acts on the weekly Emerging Artists chart, which launched in 2017. The Emerging Artists chart uses the same formula as the all-encompassing Billboard Artist 100.

The six album genre charts flipping from album sales to consumption units and expanding their depths are Bluegrass Albums, Blues Albums, Cast Albums, Classical Crossover Albums, Traditional Classical Albums (all increasing from 10 titles to 15 titles) and Kid Albums (15 to 25). The three album genre charts already ranked by consumption but increasing their depths are New Age Albums (10 to 15), Tropical Albums (20 to 25) and World Albums (15 to 25).

In addition, *Billboard* is revamping its dance/electronic songs chart offerings. Beginning with the Jan. 18-dated lists, the 50-position Hot Dance/Electronic Songs chart will now feature titles primarily recorded by DJs or producers with an emphasis on electronic-based production. Concurrently, the 25-position Hot Dance/Pop Songs chart will launch, featuring titles with dance-centric vocals, melody and hooks by artists not considered rooted in the dance/electronic genre. *Billboard* will also premiere corresponding Dance/Pop Songwriters and Dance/Pop Producers charts. Plus, the name of Top Dance/Electronic Albums will be adjusted to Top Dance Albums to better represent the array of dance titles that appear on the ranking. —K.C.

SALES AND STREAMING DATA COMPILED BY LUMINATE SOUNDTRACKS: THE WEEK’S MOST POPULAR SOUNDTRACK ALBUMS, BASED ON MULTIMETRIC CONSUMPTION, BLENDING TRADITIONAL ALBUM SALES, STREAMING-EQUIVALENT ALBUMS AND TRACK-EQUIVALENT ALBUMS, AS COMPILED BY LUMINATE. SEE CHARTS LEGEND ON BILLBOARD.COM FOR COMPLETE RULES AND EXPLANATIONS. © 2025 BILLBOARD MEDIA LLC AND LUMINATE INC. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED.



Y2K TO TODAY: SWIFT LEADS THE WAY

The superstar is the No. 1 artist through the quarter-century mark

TAYLOR SWIFT REIGNS as the top artist on *Billboard*'s recap of the first 25 years of the 21st century.

Even with the country-turned-pop superstar not making her *Billboard* chart debut until July 1, 2006 — with the then-16-year-old's co-written debut single, "Tim McGraw" — Swift has rung up 14 No. 1 albums on the Billboard 200, the most among women of all time, and 12 chart-topping songs on the Billboard Hot 100.

Among other achievements, Swift became the first artist to claim each of the Hot 100's top 10 positions when songs from her album *Midnights* debuted on the chart dated Nov. 5, 2022. She then repeated the feat — and stretched her dominance to the top 14 spots — on the list dated May 4, 2024, with tracks from her most recent full-length, *The Tortured Poets Department*.

Along the way, Swift has led *Billboard*'s year-end Top Artists charts in 2009, 2015, 2023 and 2024, becoming the first act with four such honors (dating to the category's inception in 1981).

Over the following five pages, browse *Billboard*'s Top Artists, Top Billboard 200 Albums and Top Hot 100 Songs of the 21st Century recaps. —GARY TRUST

TOP ARTISTS of the 21st Century

RANK	Artist	RANK	Artist
1	Taylor Swift	31	50 Cent
2	Drake	32	Kendrick Lamar
3	Rihanna	33	Carrie Underwood
4	Post Malone	34	Britney Spears
5	Eminem	35	Billie Eilish
6	The Weeknd	36	Nicki Minaj
7	Beyoncé	37	Linkin Park
8	Justin Bieber	38	Imagine Dragons
9	Bruno Mars	39	Ludacris
10	Usher	40	Luke Combs
11	Maroon 5	41	Destiny's Child
12	Adele	42	Kenny Chesney
13	Morgan Wallen	43	Future
14	Ed Sheeran	44	Juice WRLD
15	Katy Perry	45	T.I.
16	Lady Gaga	46	SZA
17	P!nk	47	Avril Lavigne
18	Chris Brown	48	Rascal Flatts
19	Ariana Grande	49	Christina Aguilera
20	Ye	50	Olivia Rodrigo
21	Miley Cyrus	51	Travis Scott
22	Alicia Keys	52	Lil Baby
23	The Black Eyed Peas	53	Coldplay
24	Justin Timberlake	54	Jennifer Lopez
25	Nelly	55	Bad Bunny
26	Nickelback	56	Flo Rida
27	Kelly Clarkson	57	Luke Bryan
28	Mariah Carey	58	Toby Keith
29	Jay-Z	59	Akon
30	Lil Wayne	60	Tim McGraw

SWIFT: CARLOS ALVAREZ/GETTY IMAGES FOR TAS RIGHTS MANAGEMENT

Billboard's Top Artists, Top Billboard 200 Albums and Top Hot 100 Songs of the 21st Century recaps reflect performance on weekly charts dated Jan. 1, 2000, through Dec. 28, 2024. The Top Artists category ranks the best-performing acts in that span based on activity on the Billboard 200 and the Billboard Hot 100. (Titles released prior to mid-1999 are excluded, although such entries that appeared on the Billboard 200 or Hot 100 in that span contribute to the calculation of the Top Artists chart.)

RANK	Artist
61	Jason Aldean
62	Mary J. Blige
63	Harry Styles
64	Lady A
65	Doja Cat
66	Creed
67	Michael Bublé
68	Dua Lipa
69	Sam Smith
70	Ne-Yo
71	OutKast
72	Kesha
73	Cardi B
74	R. Kelly
75	Fergie
76	3 Doors Down
77	One Direction
78	Ashanti
79	Selena Gomez
80	Blake Shelton
81	Ja Rule
82	Pitbull
83	Kid Rock
84	Twenty One Pilots
85	J. Cole
86	Florida Georgia Line
87	Khalid
88	Sean Paul
89	Daughtry
90	*NSYNC
91	Shawn Mendes
92	Keith Urban
93	Jason Derulo
94	Norah Jones
95	T-Pain
96	Josh Groban
97	Gwen Stefani
98	Santana
99	Alan Jackson
100	Fall Out Boy

1

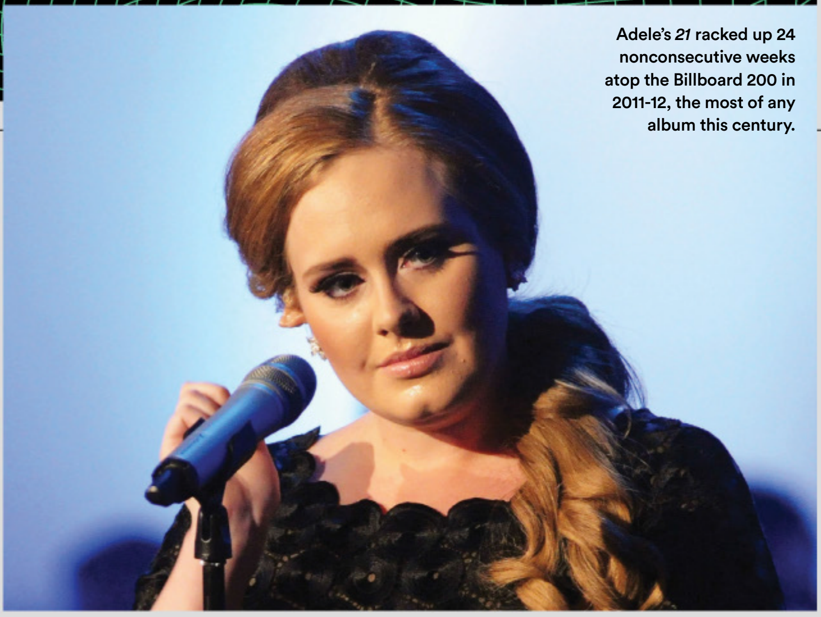
Dangerous: The Double Album
Morgan Wallen

Morgan Wallen's *Dangerous: The Double Album* rules the Top Billboard 200 Albums of the 21st Century chart. After debuting at No. 1 on the weekly list in January 2021, it remained in pole position through the chart dated March 27, 2021, becoming the first album to spend its first 10 weeks atop the list since 1987, when Whitney Houston's *Whitney* logged all 11 of its weeks in the lead from its debut.

Dangerous: The Double Album has continued to ring up chart feats since. When it reached its 86th week in the top 10 in September 2022, it surpassed Peter, Paul and Mary's self-titled album (85 weeks in 1962-64) for the record of the most time spent in the tier among albums by an individual act since the chart began publishing on a regular weekly basis in March 1956. Through the Dec. 28, 2024-dated Billboard 200, Wallen's second full-length has compiled 158 weeks in the top 10. Only one album has collected more weeks in the region: the original cast recording of *My Fair Lady*, with 173, in 1956-60.

—KEITH CAULFIELD

ADELE: JEFF KRAVITZ/FILMMAGIC/GETTY IMAGES. WALLEN: MATT WINKELMEYER/GETTY IMAGES FOR IHEARTRADIO.



Adele's *21* racked up 24 nonconsecutive weeks atop the Billboard 200 in 2011-12, the most of any album this century.

TOP BILLBOARD 200 ALBUMS of the 21st Century

RANK	Title	Artist
1	Dangerous: The Double Album	Morgan Wallen
2	21	Adele
3	Fearless	Taylor Swift
4	1989	Taylor Swift
5	Hamilton: An American Musical	Original Broadway Cast Recording
6	One Thing at a Time	Morgan Wallen
7	Hollywood's Bleeding	Post Malone
8	My Turn	Lil Baby
9	All the Right Reasons	Nickelback
10	The Fame	Lady Gaga
11	÷ (Divide)	Ed Sheeran
12	beerbongs & bentleys	Post Malone
13	Christmas	Michael Bublé
14	Lover	Taylor Swift
15	Confessions	Usher
16	Frozen	Soundtrack
17	When We All Fall Asleep, Where Do We Go?	Billie Eilish
18	Taylor Swift	Taylor Swift
19	Some Hearts	Carrie Underwood
20	Sour	Olivia Rodrigo
21	[Hybrid Theory]	Linkin Park
22	Come Away With Me	Norah Jones
23	Daughtry	Daughtry
24	Stoney	Post Malone
25	DAMN.	Kendrick Lamar
26	SOS	SZA
27	Night Visions	Imagine Dragons
28	Views	Drake
29	Midnights	Taylor Swift
30	Traveller	Chris Stapleton
31	Shoot for the Stars Aim for the Moon	Pop Smoke
32	Un Verano Sin Ti	Bad Bunny
33	Fallen	Evanescence
34	X	Ed Sheeran
35	This One's for You	Luke Combs
36	Scorpion	Drake
37	folklore	Taylor Swift
38	Goodbye & Good Riddance	Juice WRLD
39	The Eminem Show	Eminem
40	Blurryface	Twenty One Pilots

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Hamilton: An American Musical

Original Broadway Cast Recording

For nearly a decade, the original Broadway cast recording of *Hamilton: An American Musical* has proved to be a force on the Billboard 200. In July 2020, following the show's premiere on Disney+, the set reached No. 2 on the weekly chart, becoming the highest-charting cast recording since 1969, when *Hair* spent 13 weeks at No. 1.

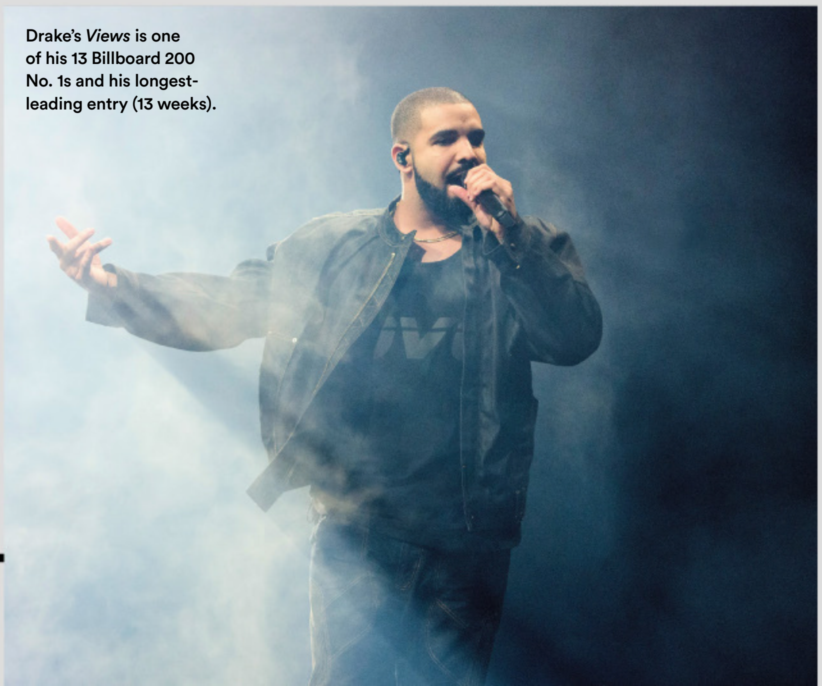
In June 2016, four years before reaching its peak on the list, *Hamilton: An American Musical* entered the top 10 for the first time (No. 3) on the heels of the production's 11 Tony Award wins. At that point, the set became just the third cast recording to hit the top 10 over the previous 50 years.

Fever for the Lin-Manuel Miranda-helmed musical was so potent that the show spun off the all-star inspired-by compilation *The Hamilton Mixtape*, which debuted at No. 1 on the Billboard 200 in December 2016. The project includes songs by Kelly Clarkson, Alicia Keys, Nas, Jill Scott and Usher.

—K.C.

RANK	Title	Artist
41	**Astroworld**	Travis Scott
42	**In the Lonely Hour**	Sam Smith
43	**High School Musical**	Soundtrack
44	**What You See Is What You Get**	Luke Combs
45	**The Emancipation of Mimi**	Mariah Carey
46	**Unorthodox Jukebox**	Bruno Mars
47	**Let Go**	Avril Lavigne
48	**Human Clay**	Creed
49	**Rock N Roll Jesus**	Kid Rock
50	**25**	Adele
51	**Need You Now**	Lady A
52	**The Highlights**	The Weeknd
53	**Curtain Call: The Hits**	Eminem
54	**Here's to the Good Times**	Florida Georgia Line
55	**American Idiot**	Green Day
56	**24K Magic**	Bruno Mars
57	**Hannah Montana 2 (Soundtrack)/Meet Miley Cyrus**	Miley Cyrus
58	**Breakaway**	Kelly Clarkson
59	**My World 2.0**	Justin Bieber
60	**1**	The Beatles

RANK	Title	Artist
61	**Hotshot**	Shaggy
62	**Country Grammar**	Nelly
63	**The Greatest Showman**	Soundtrack
64	**Starboy**	The Weeknd
65	**Certified Lover Boy**	Drake
66	**Recovery**	Eminem
67	**The E.N.D.**	The Black Eyed Peas
68	**FutureSex/LoveSounds**	Justin Timberlake
69	**Take Care**	Drake
70	**ANTI**	Rihanna
71	**Crash My Party**	Luke Bryan
72	**The Dutchess**	Fergie
73	**O Brother, Where Art Thou?**	Soundtrack
74	**Me and My Gang**	Rascal Flatts
75	**Sigh No More**	Mumford & Sons
76	**Songs in A Minor**	Alicia Keys
77	**No Strings Attached**	*NSYNC
78	**Speakerboxxx/The Love Below**	OutKast
79	**After Hours**	The Weeknd
80	**Babel**	Mumford & Sons
81	**good kid, m.A.A.d city**	Kendrick Lamar
82	**As I Am**	Alicia Keys
83	**Legends Never Die**	Juice WRLD
84	**Monkey Business**	The Black Eyed Peas
85	**Red**	Taylor Swift
86	**Planet Her**	Doja Cat
87	**Get Rich or Die Tryin'**	50 Cent
88	**My Kinda Party**	Jason Aldean
89	**Home**	The Chicks
90	**Konvicted**	Akon
91	**Back to Black**	Amy Winehouse
92	**Tha Carter III**	Lil Wayne
93	**A Day Without Rain**	Enya
94	**M!ssundaztood**	P!nk
95	**Stick Season**	Noah Kahan
96	**Fine Line**	Harry Styles
97	**Silver Side Up**	Nickelback
98	**Future Nostalgia**	Dua Lipa
99	**Supernatural**	Santana
100	**Beauty Behind the Madness**	The Weeknd



Drake's *Views* is one of his 13 Billboard 200 No. 1s and his longest-leading entry (13 weeks).

HAMILTON: NEILSON BARNARD/GETTY IMAGES. DRAKE: ERIKA GOLDRING/GETTY IMAGES.

Lady Gaga's 2008 debut album, *The Fame*, became the first of her 10 Billboard 200 top 10s.

RANK	Title	Artist
101	**Nellyville**	Nelly
102	**American Teen**	Khalid
103	**Weathered**	Creed
104	**Dark Horse**	Nickelback
105	**The Tortured Poets Department**	Taylor Swift
106	**Diamonds**	Elton John
107	**Up All Night**	One Direction
108	**Pure Heroine**	Lorde
109	**reputation**	Taylor Swift
110	**The 20/20 Experience**	Justin Timberlake
111	**Break the Cycle**	Staind
112	**A Star Is Born (Soundtrack)**	Lady Gaga & Bradley Cooper
113	**Teenage Dream**	Katy Perry
114	**American Heartbreak**	Zach Bryan
115	**Moana**	Soundtrack
116	**Good Girl Gone Bad**	Rihanna
117	**Noel**	Josh Groban
118	**The Truth About Love**	P!nk
119	**Twilight**	Soundtrack
120	**Speak Now**	Taylor Swift
121	**The Marshall Mathers LP**	Eminem
122	**Evolve**	Imagine Dragons
123	**Doo-Wops & Hooligans**	Bruno Mars
124	**?**	XXXTentacion
125	**High School Musical 2**	Soundtrack
126	**Harry's House**	Harry Styles
127	**Oops!...I Did It Again**	Britney Spears
128	**Chocolate Starfish and the Hot Dog Flavored Water**	Limp Bizkit
129	**Montevallo**	Sam Hunt
130	**Tailgates & Tanlines**	Luke Bryan
131	**Hannah Montana**	Soundtrack
132	**I Am...Sasha Fierce**	Beyoncé
133	**More Life**	Drake
134	**Minutes to Midnight**	Linkin Park
135	**Invasion of Privacy**	Cardi B
136	**Here for the Party**	Gretchen Wilson
137	**The Foundation**	Zac Brown Band
138	**Based on a True Story...**	Blake Shelton
139	**Purpose**	Justin Bieber
140	**Closer**	Josh Groban

RANK	Title	Artist
141	**Ctrl**	SZA
142	**Carnival Ride**	Carrie Underwood
143	**The Lumineers**	The Lumineers
144	**Thank U, Next**	Ariana Grande
145	**Viva la Vida or Death and All His Friends**	Coldplay
146	**Ashanti**	Ashanti
147	**Please Excuse Me for Being Antisocial**	Roddy Ricch
148	**Luv Is Rage 2**	Lil Uzi Vert
149	**PRISM**	Katy Perry
150	**V**	Maroon 5
151	**2014 Forest Hills Drive**	J. Cole
152	**F*ck Love**	The Kid LAROI
153	**The Massacre**	50 Cent
154	**Encore**	Eminem
155	**The Heist**	Macklemore & Ryan Lewis
156	**Zach Bryan**	Zach Bryan
157	**No Angel**	Dido
158	**19**	Adele
159	**If I Know Me**	Morgan Wallen
160	**Feels Like Today**	Rascal Flatts
161	**Death Race for Love**	Juice WRLD
162	**Survivor**	Destiny's Child
163	**8701**	Usher
164	**Spirit**	Leona Lewis
165	**Hoodie SZN**	A Boogie Wit Da Hoodie
166	**Love. Angel. Music. Baby.**	Gwen Stefani
167	**Dr. Dre — 2001**	Dr. Dre
168	**Free Spirit**	Khalid
169	**Mamma Mia!**	Soundtrack
170	**Feels Like Home**	Norah Jones

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The Eminem Show
Eminem

Eminem's *The Eminem Show* — his highest-ranking title on the Top Billboard 200 Albums of the 21st Century roundup — became his second leader on the weekly chart in 2002, spending six weeks in charge. It's just one of the hip-hop star's dozen top 10-charting sets on the list in the first 25 years of the century, with 11 reaching No. 1.

Eminem also ranks at No. 5 on the Top Artists of the 21st Century recap, aided by his chart performance on the Billboard 200 and his impressive history on the Hot 100. In the quarter-century tracking period, he logged 111 Hot 100 entries, including 23 top 10s and five No. 1s. "Lose Yourself," his longest-running leader on the Hot 100 (12 weeks in 2002-03), places at No. 80 on the Top Hot 100 Songs of the 21st Century ranking. —K.C.

GAGA: MANUELA CIFRA/NEWSPIX/GETTY IMAGES. EMINEM: SCOTT GRIES/IMAGEDIRECT/GETTY IMAGES.

21ST CENTURY CHARTS

Glass Animals' "Heat Waves," written by frontman Dave Bayley, spent a record 91 weeks on the Hot 100, including five at No. 1 in 2022.

RANK	Title	Artist
171	**Word of Mouf**	Ludacris
172	**Meteora**	Linkin Park
173	**Some Nights**	fun.
174	**Pain Is Love**	Ja Rule
175	**Back to Bedlam**	James Blunt
176	**Cuz I Love You**	Lizzo
177	**Only by the Night**	Kings of Leon
178	**Sleep Through the Static**	Jack Johnson
179	**Drive**	Alan Jackson
180	**YHLQMDLG**	Bad Bunny
181	**B'Day**	Beyoncé
182	**Songs About Jane**	Maroon 5
183	**The Breakthrough**	Mary J. Blige
184	**evermore**	Taylor Swift
185	**Dangerously in Love**	Beyoncé
186	**Encanto**	Soundtrack
187	**Legend: The Best of Bob Marley and The Wailers**	Bob Marley and The Wailers
188	**Exclusive**	Chris Brown
189	**Overexposed**	Maroon 5
190	**Greatest Hits**	Guns N' Roses
191	**Beyoncé**	Beyoncé
192	**The Marshall Mathers LP 2**	Eminem
193	**Title**	Meghan Trainor
194	**Coco**	Colbie Caillat
195	**1989 (Taylor's Version)**	Taylor Swift
196	**The Diary of Alicia Keys**	Alicia Keys
197	**Red (Taylor's Version)**	Taylor Swift
198	**Juno**	Soundtrack
199	**8 Mile**	Soundtrack
200	**If You're Reading This It's Too Late**	Drake

TOP HOT 100 SONGS of the 21st Century

RANK	Title	Artist
1	**Blinding Lights**	The Weeknd
2	**Uptown Funk!**	Mark Ronson featuring Bruno Mars
3	**Stay**	The Kid LAROI & Justin Bieber
4	**Party Rock Anthem**	LMFAO featuring Lauren Bennett & GoonRock
5	**I Gotta Feeling**	The Black Eyed Peas
6	**Shape of You**	Ed Sheeran
7	**Last Night**	Morgan Wallen
8	**Closer**	The Chainsmokers featuring Halsey
9	**Levitating**	Dua Lipa
10	**We Belong Together**	Mariah Carey
11	**Yeah!**	Usher featuring Lil Jon & Ludacris
12	**As It Was**	Harry Styles
13	**Circles**	Post Malone
14	**We Found Love**	Rihanna featuring Calvin Harris
15	**Girls Like You**	Maroon 5 featuring Cardi B
16	**Low**	Flo Rida featuring T-Pain
17	**Heat Waves**	Glass Animals
18	**Somebody That I Used To Know**	Gotye featuring Kimbra
19	**Despacito**	Luis Fonsi & Daddy Yankee feat. Justin Bieber
20	**Rolling in the Deep**	Adele

1

"Blinding Lights"
The Weeknd

Thanks to a record 57-week run in the top 10 of the Hot 100 from February 2020 through April 2021, including four weeks at No. 1, "Blinding Lights" ranks as the leading hit on the Top Hot 100 Songs of the 21st Century chart. In November 2021, The Weeknd's single — released through Republic Records — crowned the Greatest of All Time Hot 100 Songs chart, dating to the ranking's start in August 1958.

"I don't think [it] has hit me yet," The Weeknd (born Abel Tesfaye) told *Billboard* upon learning of the song's reigning all-time Hot 100 command. "I just count my blessings, and I'm just grateful."

"From the first time I met Abel, it was clear that he was destined for global stardom," Republic Corps co-founder and chairman Monte Lipman reflected in 2021. " 'Blinding Lights' went into the zeitgeist and became one of those songs that just had this emotional impact on so many people around the world." —G.T.

GLASS ANIMALS: JOSEPH OKPAKO/WIREIMAGE. WEEKND: MIKE EHRMANN/GETTY IMAGES.

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"E.T."
Katy Perry featuring
Kanye West

Katy Perry's pre-teenage dreams of stardom were fully realized in her mid-20s, when she logged five Hot 100 No. 1s from her third studio album, *Teenage Dream*, in 2010-11: "California Gurls," featuring Snoop Dogg; the set's title track; "Firework" (No. 97 on the Top Hot 100 Songs of the 21st Century chart); "E.T.," featuring Kanye West; and "Last Friday Night (T.G.I.F.)." Upon the last song's coronation, *Teenage Dream* joined Michael Jackson's *Bad*, in 1987-88, as the only albums to generate five Hot 100 No. 1s each. (No album has repeated the illustrious feat since.)

"Hitting No. 1 is always a great moment, but when it turns into a small piece of history, you're reminded of how many millions of people are connected to each other by even one tiny event," Perry told *Billboard* in 2011 upon achieving the honor. "Ever since I was 9 years old, singing into my hairbrush, I've dreamed very big dreams, but today is bigger than my dreams." —G.T.

RANK	Title	Artist
21	**Old Town Road**	Lil Nas X featuring Billy Ray Cyrus
22	**A Bar Song (Tipsy)**	Shaboozey
23	**Mood**	24kGoldn featuring iann dior
24	**How You Remind Me**	Nickelback
25	**Call Me Maybe**	Carly Rae Jepsen
26	**Blurred Lines**	Robin Thicke featuring T.I. + Pharrell
27	**No One**	Alicia Keys
28	**Perfect**	Ed Sheeran
29	**Boom Boom Pow**	The Black Eyed Peas
30	**Let Me Love You**	Mario
31	**Tik Tok**	Ke$ha
32	**Gold Digger**	Kanye West featuring Jamie Foxx
33	**Apologize**	Timbaland featuring OneRepublic
34	**All About That Bass**	Meghan Trainor
35	**Sunflower (Spider-Man: Into the Spider-Verse)**	Post Malone & Swae Lee
36	**Royals**	Lorde
37	**Lose Control**	Teddy Swims
38	**God's Plan**	Drake
39	**Moves Like Jagger**	Maroon 5 featuring Christina Aguilera
40	**Happy**	Pharrell Williams
41	**Just the Way You Are**	Bruno Mars
42	**Dilemma**	Nelly featuring Kelly Rowland
43	**Rockstar**	Post Malone featuring 21 Savage
44	**Family Affair**	Mary J. Blige
45	**Save Your Tears**	The Weeknd & Ariana Grande
46	**Without Me**	Halsey
47	**See You Again**	Wiz Khalifa featuring Charlie Puth
48	**Dark Horse**	Katy Perry featuring Juicy J
49	**Thrift Shop**	Macklemore & Ryan Lewis featuring Wanz
50	**One More Night**	Maroon 5
51	**Flowers**	Miley Cyrus
52	**We Are Young**	fun. featuring Janelle Monáe
53	**That's What I Like**	Bruno Mars
54	**Big Girls Don't Cry**	Fergie
55	**Sicko Mode**	Travis Scott
56	**Maria Maria**	Santana featuring The Product G&B
57	**U Got It Bad**	Usher
58	**Whatever You Like**	T.I.
59	**Down**	Jay Sean featuring Lil Wayne
60	**Bleeding Love**	Leona Lewis
61	**Independent Women Part I**	Destiny's Child
62	**Foolish**	Ashanti
63	**The Hills**	The Weeknd
64	**All of Me**	John Legend
65	**Shake It Off**	Taylor Swift
66	**One Dance**	Drake featuring Wizkid & Kyla
67	**Radioactive**	Imagine Dragons
68	**Sexy and I Know It**	LMFAO
69	**Someone Like You**	Adele
70	**Hey Ya!**	Outkast
71	**Bad Guy**	Billie Eilish
72	**Burn**	Usher
73	**The Way You Move**	Outkast featuring Sleepy Brown
74	**Cruel Summer**	Taylor Swift
75	**The Box**	Roddy Ricch
76	**Crank That (Soulja Boy)**	Soulja Boy Tell'Em
77	**In Da Club**	50 Cent
78	**Counting Stars**	OneRepublic
79	**Irreplaceable**	Beyoncé
80	**Lose Yourself**	Eminem
81	**Hanging by a Moment**	Lifehouse
82	**E.T.**	Katy Perry featuring Kanye West
83	**Fallin'**	Alicia Keys
84	**Rockstar**	DaBaby featuring Roddy Ricch
85	**I'm Real**	Jennifer Lopez featuring Ja Rule
86	**Goodies**	Ciara featuring Petey Pablo
87	**Someone You Loved**	Lewis Capaldi
88	**Hot in Herre**	Nelly
89	**Breathe**	Faith Hill
90	**Trap Queen**	Fetty Wap
91	**Run It!**	Chris Brown
92	**Love Yourself**	Justin Bieber
93	**Just Dance**	Lady Gaga featuring Colby O'Donis
94	**My Boo**	Usher & Alicia Keys
95	**Live Your Life**	T.I. featuring Rihanna
96	**Baby Boy**	Beyoncé featuring Sean Paul
97	**Firework**	Katy Perry
98	**Lollipop**	Lil Wayne featuring Static Major
99	**Give Me Everything**	Pitbull featuring Ne-Yo, Afrojack & Nayer
100	**Need You Now**	Lady A

PERRY: KRISTIAN DOWLING/GETTY IMAGES

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PG. 24 ARE ALBUM VARIANTS LOSING LUSTER?
PG. 25 LABELS' YEAR-END MARKET SHARE
PG. 26 KEEPING CELIA CRUZ'S LEGACY ALIVE

MUSIC AND MONEY

TikTok... Boom? Labels Prepare For A Ban

With the valuable music promotion tool facing an uncertain future, one marketer asks, "Where is new-artist discovery happening in 2025 if this app completely disappears?"

BY ELIAS LEIGHT // ILLUSTRATION BY LAURENT HRYBYK

DAYS AFTER A PANEL of federal judges voted to uphold a new law that would ban TikTok in the United States beginning Jan. 19, independent label Artist Partner Group started assessing how that could impact its marketing campaigns — and how to adapt.

"It's hard to imagine a reality where TikTok actually goes down," says Alec Henderson, head of digital at APG. "But we need to be prepared. We are doing video shoots ahead of time, so if it does go, we have top-tier content hitting other short-form video platforms very quickly."

Casadei Collective Marketing Agency founder J.D. Tuminski is also advising clients to be ready. "If folks are being smart right now," he says, "they're already putting plans in place for other platforms and thinking about alternative marketing strategies."

At least most music marketers have been down this road before. President-elect Donald Trump tried to ban TikTok during his first administration in 2020, but the courts blocked him. "We've had this conversation internally so many times," Rafael Rocha, CEO of marketing agency NuWave Digital, says with a sigh. "If I was a betting man, I would bet confidently that it will not get banned."

Trump returns to office on Jan. 20, and on Dec. 27, 2024, he asked the Supreme Court to postpone a hearing it's scheduled to hold on the ban until he returns to the White House. The petition indicates the president-elect would like to "save the platform while addressing national security concerns."

Still, marketers want to be prepared. If TikTok is blocked stateside, the pain would probably be felt most acutely by rising artists who don't yet have name recognition. "Where is new-artist discovery happening in 2025 if this app completely disappears?" asks Johnny Cloherty, co-founder of digital marketing company Songfluencer. "There is new-artist discovery on Instagram Reels and YouTube Shorts — it just doesn't happen on the same scale as it does on TikTok."

Some genres that are reaching a new audience abroad might also be more vulnerable. "Country music is bigger than it's ever been, and we're seeing more global success than we

Universal Music Group's Virgin Music Group agreed to acquire **Downtown Music Holdings** for $775 million, subject to regulatory approval.

Sony Music pulled its catalog from streaming service **Boomplay** due to late royalty payments.

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SiriusXM announced it would pivot from its streaming app and double down on in-car listening.

A criminal investigation was launched into suspected fraud at U.K. collecting society **PPL**.

ever have,” says Allison Laughter, vp of digital, marketing and streaming for Red Light Management. “It would be a shame to have an international platform taken away from us at a moment when we really have leverage with country acts.”

Many executives got some practice grappling with a TikTok-free existence in February 2024 when Universal Music Group’s deal with the platform expired and it pulled all its artists’ music from the app. A month later, songs from other labels that featured contributions from Universal Music Publishing Group writers were removed as well.

“That was a wake-up call for a lot of people,” says Dan Roy Carter, a former TikTok employee who recently launched Carter Projects, his own music marketing company. “That made people look at other platforms and realize they have to develop them.”

> **“If this goes down, we’ll need to be reactive toward where the content and the traffic and energy shifts.”**
>
> —ALEC HENDERSON, ARTIST PARTNER GROUP

But most marketers did not find that other short-form video platforms could fill the void left by TikTok’s absence. “Anyone I’ve spoken to who tried to pivot to another platform during that time frame generally didn’t find anything that was comparable straight away,” Carter says. That was Laughter’s experience: “I don’t think that we found the sweet spot of how to mimic the success or reach we might see on TikTok with any other platform.”

If the U.S. ban did become effective, the platform would still be available globally for hundreds of millions of users. And clips that are popular on TikTok often make their way to other social media platforms. “Say TikTok is banned here — that doesn’t mean that internationally it can’t be a part of a strategy to drive streaming,” ATG Group director of marketing Jen Darmafall says. “When you see Reels and Shorts make an impact on music consumption, it is often following something that’s going viral on TikTok first.”

Several marketers discussed using virtual private networks to circumvent a potential ban and continue to market their acts to audiences in Europe, Latin America and Asia. And digital marketers abroad would almost certainly see an influx of business from American artists and labels. “Hiring companies to be a liaison to TikTok creators outside of the U.S. is something that I would think about if I was a musician,” Tuminski says.

Artists and labels would also watch carefully to see where TikTok’s large, famously active user base in the United States migrates. “If this goes down, we’ll need to be reactive toward where the content and the traffic and energy shifts,” Henderson says. Cloherty agrees: “Short-form video is not going away.”

Reels and Shorts are typically mentioned as potential TikTok substitutes, but other platforms can also serve as potential conduits for conveying music to listeners.

X, formerly Twitter, doesn’t pop up in many music marketing conversations these days, but Henderson has seen it bring in new listeners for rappers. He has been focused on trying to harness the power of Twitch as well. APG artist Flawed Mangoes gained a sizable jump in streams after appearing on a stream by Kai Cenat, one of the platform’s most popular personalities.

Marketers are also intrigued by the possibilities of Snapchat. “It’s still very heavily used by kids,” says Jenna Rosenberg, former vp of digital marketing at Atlantic Records. “There is an audience on there; it’s just that no one’s talking to them.” Darmafall has observed “more and more artists posting about following them on Snapchat.”

For now, though, TikTok keeps driving new listeners to songs like Lola Young’s “Messy” and Sam Barber’s “Indigo.” “As people are building out their plans for any releases that are coming at the start of the year, they are still including TikTok as part of that plan,” Darmafall says. “It just can’t be your only plan.” b

FROM ZERO: COURTESY OF WARNER RECORDS

HAS THE VINYL VARIANT EXPLOSION FIZZLED?

With labels releasing an average of seven different versions to vault artists into the upper reaches of album charts, some consumers are starting to lose interest

AFTER HELPING TO create the watery pink-and-gray cover art for Linkin Park’s 2024 album, *From Zero*, Frank Maddocks — Warner Records vp of creative and the band’s art director for 24 years — chopped the visual into five pieces and adapted them into collages for four alternate vinyl releases. His work resulted in 17 physical versions of *From Zero*. Known as variants, they included 11 vinyl albums, three CDs, a CD box set and two cassettes. The combined sales contributed to Linkin Park’s debut at No. 1 on four of *Billboard*’s rock album charts in November, including Top Rock Albums and Top Hard Rock Albums.

It’s standard in today’s industry for hit artists to market variants at a premium to collectors and superfans, but that trend appears to be wearing thin.

According to Luminate, in early 2019, each of the top 10 albums on the Billboard 200 arrived with an average of 3.3 different versions of physical albums per week. By the end of 2023, that number had jumped to an average of 8.9 versions. During this time, annual album sales jumped from 18.8 million to 49.6 million. “It’s a great revenue play, and the margins are solid,” says Tom Corson, co-chairman/COO at Warner Records. “K-pop, to some degree, helped unlock this market as we learn from their ability to service the fan. If that manifests itself in a greater chart result, great.”

Taylor Swift is the master of this approach, scoring a No. 1 album earlier in 2024 with the help of 859,000 first-week sales, including six vinyl versions of *The Tortured Poets Department*. And every time she sought a chart boost, she rolled out more versions — not just physical albums and CDs, but digital downloads — allowing the album to rule the Billboard 200 for 17 total weeks. At one point in May, the album stayed ahead of Dua Lipa’s No. 2 *Radical Optimism*, which arrived with 20 physical versions.

But critics say the trend has gone over the top in recent years. In 2024, Twice’s *With YOU-th* delivered 14 CD and three vinyl variants; ATEEZ’s *Golden Hour: Part.2* had 23 CDs, six vinyl albums and three digital downloads — and both debuted at No. 1 on the Billboard 200.

Perhaps then, it’s not surprising that demand for variants may be showing signs of oversaturation: Fall Out Boy’s 2023 album, *So Much (for) Stardust*, dropped with 31 physical versions in its first week, but album copies were marked down by 30% during a recent holiday sale by e-tailer The Sound of Vinyl, suggesting low demand.

Labels nonetheless remain committed to the strategy, although Warner Records senior vp of marketing Peter Standish says the label’s analytics department attempts to predict how many copies of a given album might sell, given the expense of manufacturing vinyl and long lead times to produce it. “We are trying to offer at least one configuration that’s competitive financially — then maybe more elaborate ones, with more packaging, for a harder-core fan,” he says. “But you also want to balance that with not overwhelming them with choice.” —STEVE KNOPPER

Canada's Federal Court of Appeal paused a 5% tax on streaming companies in the country as legal challenges play out.

Republic Records owner **Universal Music Group** settled with music investment platform **Republic** to resolve a trademark lawsuit.

CURRENT MARKET SHARE: REPUBLIC AND INTERSCOPE DOMINATE THE YEAR

Both labels led their nearest competitors by more than 4%

BY DAN RYS

AT THE END OF 2023, Republic Records' industry-leading current market share of 13.47% represented the best full-year mark for a label since at least 2015, the beginning of the streaming era. Until this past year, when it broke its own mark, posting a 14.90% current share fueled by mega albums from Taylor Swift, Morgan Wallen and Sabrina Carpenter. (Republic Records' market share includes those of Carpenter's label, Island Records, and Wallen's labels, Big Loud and Mercury, as well as Cash Money and indie distributor Imperial.)

Lamar

It was the second year in a row that Republic led its competition by more than 4%, and much of that success can be attributed to record-shattering Swift, whose album *The Tortured Poets Department* was more than twice as big in the United States last year as the runner-up, Wallen's 2023 album, *One Thing at a Time*. But it was also due to the remarkable rise of Island's one-two punch of Carpenter and Chappell Roan, whose albums — *Short n' Sweet* and *The Rise and Fall of a Midwest Princess*, respectively — ranked among the 10 biggest of 2024 and helped Island quadruple its current market share, from 0.62% in 2023 to 2.49% in 2024.

Republic wasn't the only label to have a big year. In second place was Interscope Geffen A&M, whose current share grew nearly two full points year over year to 10.72% in 2024 — a share that steadily increased as the year progressed. (Interscope's market share also includes Verve Music Group.) Billie Eilish's *Hit Me Hard and Soft* led the way for IGA, and Kendrick Lamar's Drake dis track "Not Like Us" was among the biggest songs of the year, while his Billboard 200-topping November album, *GNX*, helped capitalize on that momentum. Interscope also finished the year with a market share that was more than 4% higher than its next-closest competitor, Warner Records. (Market-share rankings do not reflect the 2024 reorganization of Universal Music Group [UMG], which brought Def Jam under the purview of Republic chiefs Monte and Avery Lipman, forming REPUBLIC, and Capitol under Interscope's John Janick, forming Interscope Capitol Labels Group. If it did, REPUBLIC would have a 15.46% current share and ICLG would have 14.70%.)

Swift

Which is not to say Warner Records had a down year. After posting a healthy 5.96% current share in 2023, in 2024, it bested sister label Atlantic Records for the first time in years with a year-end 6.55% current share, led by best new artist Grammy Award nominees Benson Boone ("Beautiful Things") and Teddy Swims ("The Door"), plus the continued momentum of Zach Bryan, whose latest album, *The Great American Bar Scene*, was another major release for the label. (Warner Records' market share includes Warner Nashville, Warner Latina and Rhino.)

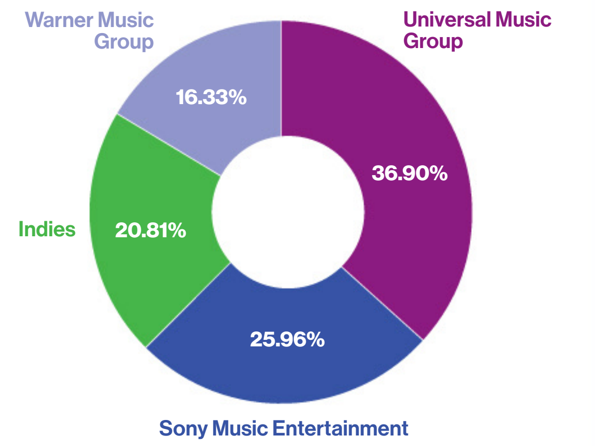
Atlantic, Columbia Records, RCA Records and Capitol Music Group all had declines in current market share, but the eighth- and ninth-ranked labels of 2024 — Epic Records and Alamo Records, respectively — made significant gains. Epic jumped from 2.31% in 2023 to 2.59%, and Alamo nearly doubled its share, from 1.13% in 2023 to 2.11% in 2024, with much of that attributed to the success of its Santa Anna distribution company. Rounding out the top 10 is another Sony label, Sony Music Latin, which also grew, from 1.94% in 2023 to 2.04% in 2024.

Among the label groups and the independent sector, year-over-year performances were mixed. Fueled by the successes of Republic and Interscope, UMG grew 1.09% to a 36.90% current share in 2024. The indie sector's collective market share also increased, by 0.71%, from 20.14% to 20.81%. Sony Music Entertainment, on the other hand, fell 1.13% to 25.96%, and Warner Music Group followed suit, dropping from 16.96% to 16.33%.

At the label-group level, overall share — which includes catalog in addition to front-line releases — told a different story. SME actually grew the most from 2023 to 2024, up 0.22% to 27.39%. UMG grew 0.17% to 38.61%. WMG dipped from 18.63% to 18.39%.

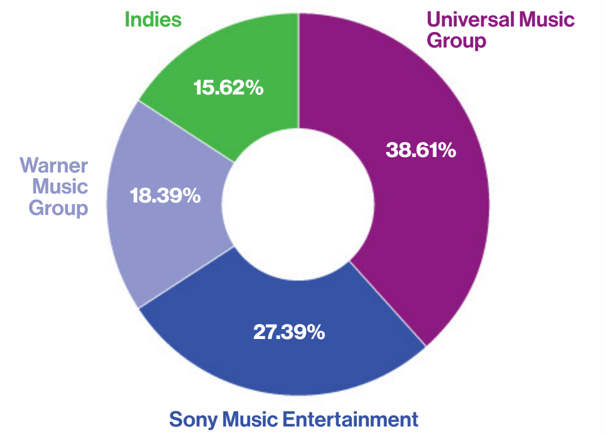
LAMAR: STEFANIE KEENAN/GETTY IMAGES. SWIFT: JOHN SHEARER/TAS24/GETTY IMAGES.

Current



Label	Share
Republic Records	14.90%
Interscope Geffen A&M	10.72%
Warner Records	6.55%
Atlantic Records	5.64%
Columbia Records	4.59%
RCA Records	4.11%
Capitol Music Group	3.98%
Epic Records	2.59%
Alamo Records	2.11%
Sony Music Latin	2.04%

Overall



Label	Share
Republic Records	10.39%
Interscope Geffen A&M	10.17%
Atlantic Records	7.63%
Warner Records	6.88%
Columbia Records	5.97%
Capitol Music Group	5.95%
RCA Records	5.00%
Epic Records	2.67%
Sony Nashville	2.03%
Universal Music Group Nashville	1.81%

SOURCE Data from Dec. 29, 2023, through Dec. 26, 2024, in the United States, as calculated by Luminate.

CD Baby laid off members of its creator services team.

Cara Donatto was named executive vp of media strategy at **Atlantic Music Group**.

Pardillo photographed Dec. 20, 2024, in Palmetto Bay, Fla.

From The Desk Of...
Omer Pardillo

EXECUTOR, CELIA CRUZ ESTATE; VP OF ENTERTAINMENT, LOUD AND LIVE

BY LEILA COBO

PHOTOGRAPHED BY ALFONSO DURAN

WHEN CELIA CRUZ died in July 2003 at the age of 77, nearly 100,000 mourners paid their respects before her open casket viewing in Miami. In New York, Patti LaBelle sang at her memorial mass in St. Patrick's Cathedral, then-Governor George Pataki declared "Celia Cruz Day," more than 20,000 crowded the funeral home in the Upper East Side and a 30-block stretch of Fifth Avenue was shut down to accommodate thousands more. The death of the beloved "Queen of Salsa" from complications due to a brain tumor became an event as celebrated as her stunning performances during life.

Cruz, who defied Cuba's communist government when she left her home country at the dawn of the 1959 revolution, also defied the odds of Latin music careers at the time by becoming the only Afro Latina singer to achieve enduring, global fame. Often compared to Ella Fitzgerald, Cruz recorded over 70 albums in a career that spanned three record labels, notching 28 entries on *Billboard*'s Tropical Albums chart. More than 20 years after her death, she generated 64 million on-demand official streams in the United States in 2024, according to Luminate.

Omer Pardillo — who became Cruz's manager when he was in his 20s and is the executor of her estate — is a key reason the legendary artist remains relevant. When he was 17, he interned at RMM, the powerful tropical indie record label to which Cruz was signed, and worked on every aspect of her career. When Cruz left RMM, she named Pardillo her manager and executor.

"Even now, sometimes people tell me, 'You got there at the very end [of her career],' " Miami-based Pardillo says. "But my loyalty was unconditional with Celia and something she saw from the very beginning." That loyalty remains today. Since partnering with Loud And Live CEO Nelson Albareda in 2005, Pardillo has kept Cruz alive in the public eye with a U.S. postage stamp and a commemorative quarter, a Barbie doll, multiple exhibits, merchandise lines, a Telemundo TV series and even a namesake wine.

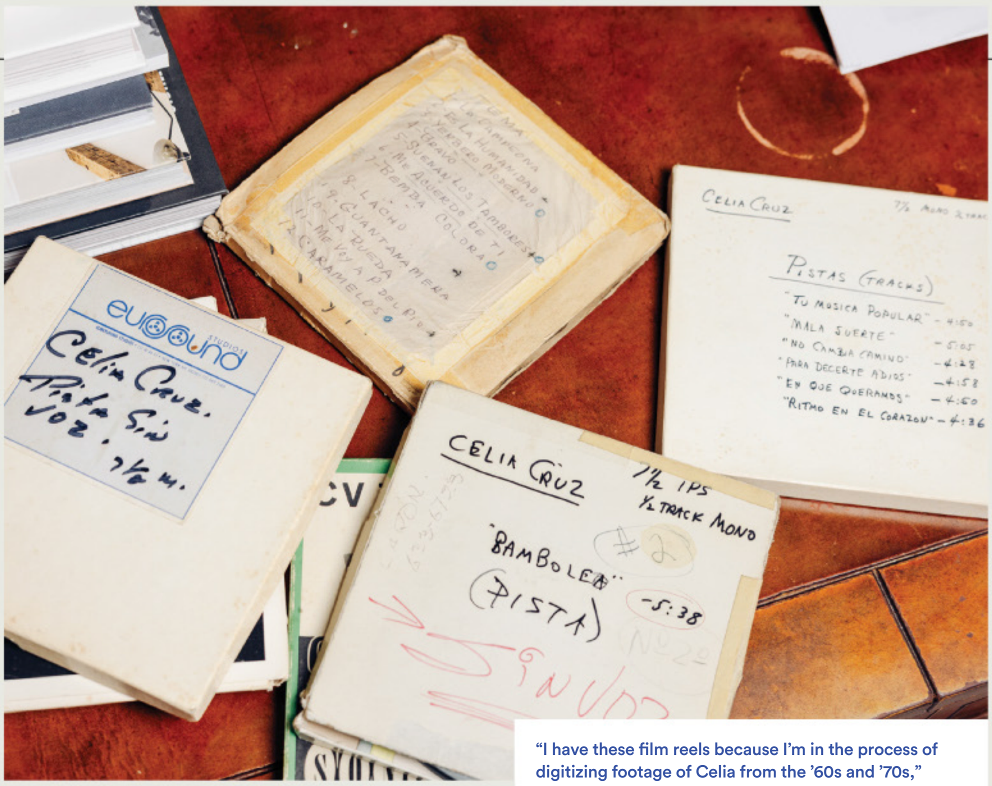
Billboard spoke with Pardillo as he prepares to celebrate the centennial of the singer's birth in 2025.

You are the executor of the Celia Cruz estate. What exactly does that entail?
I manage all assets that come into the estate — royalties, approvals from the labels, creative, productions, everything. As executor, I receive a percentage, and obviously, all the business deals I had or I bring, I charge 20%. The Loud And Live team, especially Nelson [Albareda], help me a lot. We did a deal with Mattel two years ago for a Celia Barbie; we put out a [Napa Valley-produced] wine to celebrate women; Celia was the face of Wells Fargo Bank for Hispanic audiences. One of the biggest achievements was our deal with the U.S. Mint. She's the first Afro Latina on a coin and the first Latina artist on a coin. I always say Nelson invests 25 cents and gets a dollar in return. Sometimes I get carried away with nostalgia or feeling, and I'll say, "We have to do something with this brand because they supported Celia once." He makes me stop and analyze.

Was the U.S. Mint deal lucrative?
We don't make money with the Mint. But the awareness of Celia Cruz through the coin has been incredible. The dollar is the most important currency in the world. And the fact that this woman — who was poor and Black and had to flee Cuba and was able to conquer the world with just her voice — is now on a U.S. coin is very relevant. Same thing with the Celia U.S. Postal Service stamp. They both have a huge sentimental value, but also economic, because thanks to the coin, for example, many other things have followed.

BMG promoted **Katie Kerkhover** to senior vp of A&R, frontline recordings, North America.

Hugh Forrest was promoted to president of **South by Southwest**, while co-president/chief brand officer **Jann Baskett** announced she would step down.



"I have these film reels because I'm in the process of digitizing footage of Celia from the '60s and '70s," Pardillo says.

"This briefcase belonged to my grandfather, who carried it to work in New York," Pardillo says. "Today, it serves as my lucky charm in the office."

Celia
mi vida es cantar

Cruz's dedication, which is framed with her 1998 album, *Mida Vida Es Cantar*, reads: "To Omer Pardillo, the person I most admire for his talent, professionalism, and I love him because I'm his second mom."

"This chair was used by Celia in her office for over 30 years."

Did Cruz own any of her catalog?
Not at all. That was her only mistake. Celia never owned anything. She recorded with Fania, which now is Craft; RMM, which is Universal today; and Sony. The best deal was Sony, where she was treated as an icon. It was different. The other deals were the kinds of deals from back then where they say, "Here's X amount for a record deal, and we own everything forever."

But Sony had great royalties, a great team behind Celia. We get royalties from Sony, Universal and Craft. I renegotiated royalties with Universal, Sony was always perfect, and Craft is something we're working on. She's collecting the same royalty they offered when she initially signed with them [decades ago]. Still, our revenue comes mostly from recording royalties and brand partnerships. We do three to four major partnerships a year. And on Spotify alone, we had 82.3 million [global] streams for the first six months of 2024. That's not bad for an artist who's been dead 21 years.

Have you tried to purchase her catalog?
No. It's worth too much money.

It was recently announced that Hyphenate Media — Eva Longoria and Cris Abrego's production company — was part of a group that acquired the rights to work on a movie about Cruz. What can you tell us about that?
I have three projects with Celia pending: a Broadway musical, a documentary and the film. I think in the next five years, we'll accomplish all three. Hyphenate Media bought the rights for film and TV, and the estate was represented by Raymond García of Uncontained Media. Producer Gloria Calderón Kellett, who is Cuban American, is working on the film project. The film is very important because it will tell things she never told and were not in the [Telemundo] series. Issues with racism, for example, that she never shared with anyone. She always said the negative had to be locked away so they couldn't cause more pain.

What are the advantages and challenges of managing the estate of an artist like Cruz?
The big challenge is we don't own the music rights. So anything related to music, we have to go to the labels. For example, if Mattel wants Barbie to sing "Quimbara," they have to negotiate those rights with Craft. If I had the ownership of the masters, I could do so much. With the Fania catalog, for example, I can suggest, but I don't own. It's frustrating. The advantage is we're dealing with an artist that was always very respected, and that respect is still the same. There's a love and a connection with fans, which is very, very important.

What do you have in the works for Cruz's centennial?
We're in the process of closing several brand deals, including a major clothing retailer who will put out Celia apparel. We're also in negotiations with a major restaurant brand. Mostly, we're focused on concerts. We're talking with different venues to produce Celia Sinfónica, a series of concerts with different symphony orchestras in different countries, for example. And there's an upcoming Smithsonian Latino exhibit that opens in May. We've had 20 exhibits since Celia's death, and the Smithsonian has 33% of her outfits, shoes, documents and wigs in their collection.

I have to imagine that with artificial intelligence and new technology, you're getting requests to produce new songs with Celia's voice. Recently, Cuban artist Yotuel used AI to add her voice to a new version of "Patria y Vida," for example.
I approve any use of name, music or image. We have an attorney who sends out letters declining proposals all year long. We really look after that [intellectual property]. Otherwise, the brand will either disappear or will become too accessible. Yotuel's song was the first time anything was done with AI and Celia's voice, and I think it came out very well. But from there to a full album, I'm not there yet. I could rerecord the entire catalog, but I feel we'll lose the essence. I'm told there are producers who can make it sound exactly the same, but it's not exactly the same because she's not here.

It's surprising to me that no other woman has emerged in the tropical music scene since Cruz's death. Why do you think this is?
It has to do with how professional Celia was. She was fully focused on her career. She was very forward-thinking; she was so flamboyant, long before Lady Gaga. She was so humble, and yet she had a divine grace and a power onstage that I have yet to see again.

She was such a fashion icon, with her wigs and her fantastic, glitzy dresses. Did she ever consider doing a fashion line?
No. Celia modeled for Dolce & Gabbana, Thierry Mugler, Valentino. But she was very focused on her career and her voice, and she never thought of a business beyond her music. She always said, "My voice is my business, and I live for my voice." ■

MA

From left: Creed, Reymore, Capozza, Anderson, Russin and Pepe photographed Dec. 10, 2024, in Los Angeles.

MANAGER OF THE YEAR

Brandon Creed

From *Barbie* to Brat Summer to *Wicked* and more, Good World has dominated since launching as a firm

BY LYNDSEY HAVENS

PHOTOGRAPHED BY JOEL BARHAMAND

THERE'S DEFINITELY BEEN moments where I wished I could be in two places at the same time," says Brandon Creed, reflecting on a year filled with culture-defining moments across his company's roster. He's gotten close — in early March, he had to be on separate coasts within 48 hours.

On March 8, Ariana Grande released her critically praised seventh album, *Eternal Sunshine*. On March 9, she was the musical guest on *Saturday Night Live* in New York — Creed was there. On March 10, Grande presented an Oscar at the 96th annual Academy Awards in Los Angeles, where client Mark Ronson was also performing in the night's biggest spectacle: a star-studded live debut of Ryan Gosling's *Barbie* song "I'm Just Ken" — Creed was there, too.

"It was definitely a tiring weekend," says Creed, 47. "Thankfully, I think my relationship with all my artists is such that we have a great team so they're always supported wherever they are."

His Good World team is a tight-knit group of savvy managers — including Dani Russin and Tyler Reymore, both of whom have been by his side for over a decade, along with Anika Capozza, Chris Pepe and Emma Anderson (among others). In 2023, when Creed left his position at Full Stop, the superstar management firm his own Creed Company merged with in 2017, his crew followed. After six years, Creed craved the kind of company he had launched his management career with when he had founded Creed Company in 2010 and set out to create the newer, more matured version of exactly that.

In August 2023, Creed established Good World Management with a high-profile roster including Charli xcx (co-managed with Sam Pringle and Twiggy Rowley), Troye Sivan, Ronson and Tame Impala (co-managed with Jodie Regan). His first new signing was Demi Lovato, followed by Grande.

"I was excited by the challenge of it, honestly," he says of launching a new venture. "Creed Company was born out of [necessity] — I was an executive at a record company and started managing on the side." With Good World, Creed has much more experience, but the same drive. "We're trying to keep it familial and small and build accordingly, based on what we need."

Creed got his start in the industry as music executive Tom Corson's assistant before becoming one of the first employees of Clive Davis' J Records, which he describes as "like going to grad school." From there, he says, "management found me" when he met Bruno Mars and his writing partner, Philip Lawrence. "I watched Clive launch Alicia Keys and position superstars," Creed says. "What he did and what he looked for, I took it and applied it as best I could."

Since its beginning, Good World has celebrated one industry-rattling moment after another, from Charli graduating to arena headliner with her and Sivan's in-demand Sweat Tour to Grande conquering new territory with *Wicked*. Such year-defining victories have helped Creed and Good World earn *Billboard*'s first Manager of the Year honor. Here, he and his team reflect on what Creed calls "the longest fastest year."

When you think back to launching Good World, what stands out?

BRANDON CREED We were in the midst of *Barbie* summer with Mark, and that was an amazing experience. And Troye had just [released the single] "Rush."

DANI RUSSIN It was a show-must-go-on sort of thing. We didn't have the luxury of pausing. We were grateful that essentially our whole roster came with us, so we just had to keep working. This was a really welcomed exclamation point on the summer.

ANIKA CAPOZZA We've always been really small and mighty, so when we moved over here, it was all hands on deck on every level. Like, "What snacks are we getting?" Things that you don't think about at a big company when you walk in and everything is all set up. But it made it fun.

TYLER REYMORE Coming back into a house and it feeling so warm and cozy and down to earth, you take a big breath. That was what Creed Company was years ago.

RUSSIN In a lot of ways, it feels like we were getting back to how we started.

Dani, you've worked with Brandon the longest, since 2009. What drew you to his management style?

RUSSIN Brandon is very keen. He can read people, he's a great decision-maker, and he has a very diplomatic management style. In this office, and in every office we've worked in, it's definitely like good ideas can come from anywhere. We've always fostered an environment where we promote within. And we don't really have ranks, but to the extent that we do, it's been somebody that's interned with us.

CHRIS PEPE I'd actually left management for a bit and was the one person who didn't come along, and I always looked from afar like, "If I were to ever get back into management, this is the team I'd want to be on." There's a lot of trust here.

CAPOZZA I started as a receptionist and then was an assistant and then a manager, and I've really been with Brandon my entire career in the music industry. What drew me the most is it didn't feel like there was ever a ceiling for any of us. He allows us the ability to grow and take charge and be assertive and have a presence in the room.

EMMA ANDERSON I started as his assistant and always felt like he trusted me, so that gave me confidence. When we were leaving Full Stop, a lot of my friends were like, "This is a huge risk." And I was like, "Not really." I never have felt like I've been put in a box here.

REYMORE Brandon has always exuded such a quiet confidence, and it's something I've always admired. When I first started working with him at Creed Company, he was in the living room with the other managers. It makes you want to work harder for someone who really values and sees you peer to peer.

Creed

You named the company Good World. What's a moment this year where, commercial success aside, you felt the positive impact?

ALL Sweat.

CREED It was a scary proposition at first because it's two of our artists; if it doesn't go right, that's high stakes. But they have so much respect for each other, they wanted to build and create something really unique. They dove in and did that.

RUSSIN Brandon had the idea for Sweat, and it was definitely like, "Avengers, assemble…"

CREED With some resistance. It took us a while…

RUSSIN Listen, you said it, not me.

Where was the resistance coming from?

CREED It was an idea over the last few years [that] just never lined up. And then when we were planning Troye's tour and talking about Charli's, we pitched it and…

RUSSIN It was now or never.

CREED And there was a lot of blind faith. Each artist questioned whether it was the right thing for them to do in this moment, and rightfully so. We had to move some things and plotted it out and gave the tour time to sell and then everything kicked in with Brat Summer, and it really took off.

RUSSIN And then how that impacted in the real world, when we would go to these shows and watch [our] friends, their friends, the wider industry enjoy themselves…

PEPE I remember that video you sent in our group chat. The lights were on after the show ended and the energy on the floor of the crowd beaming, dancing, still having a party. It was one of those "Oh, this is why we do this" moments.

CREED That's another thread, and it might be corny, but there is so much positivity and light, especially now when we really need it. It's an honor to help get that into the world. I mean, Mark on the Oscars. I remember Steven Spielberg walking into the room after and he was like, "I've never seen anything like that on this stage."

How has it felt to watch Charli enjoy her biggest year?

CREED We've been working with Charli since 2018. I remember going to see her at a rave in London and it was like a smack in the face. It was coming off the *Pop 2* era, and then we went right into the *Charli* phase. But to see her grow, it's so gratifying — and slightly vindicating, just because we knew it. To see the world jump in on this has been a career highlight for me because she deserves it, and to be doing it so unapologetically is just incredible.

Ariana Grande also had a major 2024. When you start working with an artist who is already a superstar, how do you find your rhythm?

CREED We definitely hold and make space for that. We're not [a company that's] going to come in and be like, "This is how we do it," and change everything. Right before [signing Grande] we had just signed Demi [Lovato], another huge artist that has been around for a long time with a lot of success. It's really turning on the empath and figuring out how they work and how you fit in and just watching and learning. And Ariana had an existing team around her: Justin Adams, Ray Rock and Grace Segundo. I just fit myself in there and took cues from her and them and we got into a rhythm, but it takes a minute.

Will Good World sign more talent?

CREED We are extremely discerning with any artists at this stage. We have room, don't get me wrong, for the right thing, and we would build accordingly. I think the developing-artist space is extremely challenging right now, especially for managers. Especially for a young manager, it's hard to make money. So our focus is definitely on the more established artists and ones that have built an audience. But, you know, there are no rules.

Would you sign actors to the roster?

CREED I would absolutely be interested in that. It's about the person. It's about being inspired by what they want to do. What we love is all of our artists want to do more than be an artist. Most of them act; Mark is scoring soundtracks and writing a book. [Ariana] got a Golden Globe nomination. That [was] amazing to see her get recognized. Troye and Demi have their own acting credits. I do particularly love the film and TV space. Charli's pursuing that with a lot of success right now. That is exciting and inspiring to me, getting to be in all these different scenarios.

How do you prepare an artist, and yourselves, for their biggest year?

RUSSIN We have an extreme amount of patience when it comes to not skipping steps and [having the] "This could take 10 years" conversation. We're prepared for that. And I don't know that we feel that there's as much gratification in the instant moment. We really try to set things up so that we're building the road to get there along the way. So when it comes, they've done their 10,000 hours — as have we.

What challenges do managers face today?

CREED It's really hard for young managers. Artists are looking around at what others have and what others are doing, and they're under a tremendous amount of pressure themselves. So when they feel that, they put the pressure on their person that's right there — and that's their manager. So I do think malleability is important and understanding how to shape teams around each artist and support them. And [more] humility and less ego is important.

PEPE I work across Demi and she's working on her album right now, and a key thing of our process has been allowing her to take that time that she needed and even encouraging it, because she is used to an industry that wants more and more and more. Encouraging that patience and investment in art, that has been honored this year in a big way after the pendulum swing of TikTok short form.

CREED Impatience is a real challenge. One of our biggest challenges as well is the toxicity of fandom now. I feel like half the time we are being told how to do our jobs by [social media], and that is an exercise of *our* patience because our artists are also seeing it — not saying they react to it, but it's a challenge across the board.

RUSSIN The sense of ownership over an artist's body, their being…

CREED Their decisions… Look, we are grateful for the fans; that's why we're all here. But there are boundaries that I think get broken quite often.

What would you tell someone wanting to enter artist management?

RUSSIN The barrier of entry is actually quite fuzzy. If you want to be a manager, you manage somebody. I'm not saying you're a good manager… It's a lot of head down, fly on the wall, behind the scenes, unglamorous, ungratifying work at first. If you don't have a desire to be of service, this is probably not the area for you.

REYMORE As long as you are focusing on supporting artists and music that you care so deeply about, that's going to make the late nights and the weekends feel like joy.

PEPE [Get] as much hands-on experience as you can, even if it's an artist that is local to your community, especially if you're talking about someone in high school or college who's wanting to do this. I didn't have any connections. I started by working at CAA, and that led me to meeting managers, and that led me to my first management job. Our mindsets these days are quick payoffs. But it's a lot like, "What are the first things you can do to get to where you want to be?"

CAPOZZA It's the same philosophy we use for artists, I'm realizing: not skipping steps.

CREED I was an intern, I was an assistant. I say this to every intern that comes here: Cultivate relationships with your peers because that's who you're going to grow up in the business with. They're the ones that will be head of the label one day or whatever direction the person goes.

RUSSIN The assistant mafia… Don't burn bridges, because everyone sticks around.

CREED It is real, and you don't think that when you're trying to get into the business. You think you got to get to the top man or woman, but it's really the support group that is going to let you enter — or you find a genius artist and grab on.

CAPOZZA I remember you saying that when I started: Don't look up. Look around you.

Looking ahead, what goals do you have for yourself and the company?

CREED Ariana's [year] is pretty mapped out. We know where she is going to be and what she's going to be doing for the majority of the year. Same with Charli; Brat Summer, Fall, Winter is going to continue. Troye is going to be in a creative year, hopefully making his next record. We're in the planning stages for Tame Impala. Demi hopefully will be starting her next era midway through the year. Mark's going to hopefully kick off a new artist era; hopefully the book he's been writing will come out. Nothing is planned, but everyone's going to be busy. And then we'll map out 2026… The goal is to continue doing what we're doing. I've been really fortunate to have a breadth of experiences over the years with such incredible artists and artistry and moments in time — that makes it fun. And there's been times where it hasn't been fun and I'm like, "Maybe I need to do something else." And then something clicks and I get reengaged, and that's what's happened this year. b

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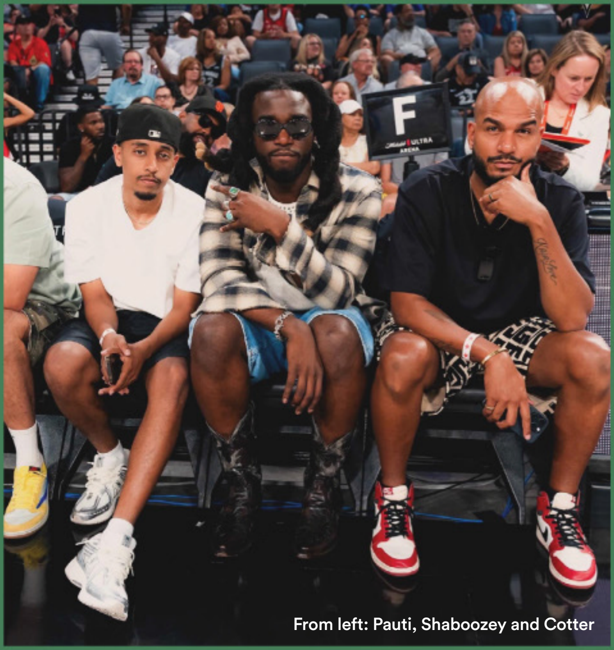
MANAGERS TO WATCH

These managers on the rise have helped the biggest breakout artists, songwriters and producers of the past year navigate major wins and milestones, from opening for superstars and selling out headlining arena shows to earning Grammy nods and topping the charts — with some even making history.

—LYNDSEY HAVENS



From left: Pauti, Shaboozey and Cotter

Abas Pauti, Jared Cotter

AGES **27, 43**
COMPANIES **American Dogwood, Range**
KEY CLIENTS **Shaboozey, Paul Russell**

"It wasn't until I met Shaboozey where the thought of artist management became a serious career aspiration for me," says Pauti, noting that the chart-topping artist gave him "confidence" to succeed in the role. As for Cotter, after entering the industry as a songwriter, he soon became "disenchanted, but still wanted to be a champion for artists." Together, Pauti and Cotter have helped Shaboozey and Russell deliver breakout hits with the former's record-tying 19-week Billboard Hot 100 No. 1 smash, "A Bar Song (Tipsy)," and the latter's viral hit "Lil Boo Thang." Pauti says, "To know I played a role in helping both my clients get their records heard and loved from people across the globe will always be my greatest success."

Lunt (left) and Dasha

Alex Lunt

AGE **31**
COMPANY **Type A Management**
KEY CLIENTS **Dasha, Beauty School Dropout, Dalton Davis, Anthony Ortiz**

Since starting his management career a decade ago, Lunt has learned that "it is crucial to surround yourself with knowledgeable colleagues you can trust." Last year, that approach paid off with country newcomer Dasha, who celebrated a trio of firsts: debuting on the Hot 100 with her viral hit "Austin," performing at the CMT Awards in April 2024 and to a packed stadium at CMA Fest in June. Lunt says, "The best feeling has not been any accolade, but celebrating the success with a group of incredibly talented and passionate people."

Christina Li, Michael Lewis

AGES **29, 29**
COMPANY **Nonstop Management**
KEY CLIENTS **JKash, Michael Pollack, Ali Tamposi, Jake Torrey**

Li says working as an assistant to hit-maker JKash "was a crash course in the music industry," while Lewis feels "incredibly fortunate to call [him] a mentor." The two also count Nonstop founder Jaime Zeluck Hindlin and president Bianca Minniti-Bean for being instrumental in their careers so far, guiding them through a major 2024 that kicked off with Michael Pollack winning his first Grammy: record of the year, for co-writing Miley Cyrus' "Flowers." Other highlights included Pollack and Ali Tamposi co-writing two original songs with Maren Morris for animated film *The Wild Robot* and Jake Torrey co-writing Marshmello and Kane Brown's "Miles on It," which made history as the first single to enter the top five on both Hot Dance/Electronic Songs (No. 1) and Hot Country Songs (No. 4).

From left: Li, Pollack and Lewis

From left: Lopez Genzink, Carpenter and Davidson

Amy Davidson

AGE **30**
COMPANY **Volara Management**
KEY CLIENTS **Sabrina Carpenter, Marina Diamandis, RIAH**

Davidson has worked alongside Volara founder Janelle Lopez Genzink from day one, but, as Davidson says, the past 12 months in particular "have been nothing short of a fever dream as we've effectively checked off almost every item on our collective bucket lists." Such items included Sabrina Carpenter scoring her first Hot 100 chart-topper with "Please Please Please" (while "Taste" and "Espresso" hit Nos. 2 and 3, respectively) and first Billboard 200 No. 1 album, *Short n' Sweet*; an arena tour; a *Saturday Night Live* performance; and six Grammy nominations. Plus, Volara celebrated signing Marina Diamandis to its roster. "Effective management starts at the core of why you are there in the first place: to listen and respond to an artist's needs," Davidson says. "Understanding that an artist is a person with life happening outside of work is key for me."

PAUTI, COTTER: ALLAN PIMENTA. DAVIDSON: CHRISTOPHER POLK FOR VARIETY. LUNT: COURTESY ALEX LUNT. LI, LEWIS: JAYNIE KARP.

Christopher Milano

AGE **n/a**
COMPANY **The Vision Management**
KEY CLIENTS **4Batz, Bear Bailey, Guwop Reign**

Milano "learned the ups and downs" of music management after meeting Akon and his brother Bu Thiam through the Bay Area's "underground scene." So when he met R&B singer 4Batz in 2023, he says, "opportunity met preparation." In 2024, the pair celebrated a breakout year as the artist debuted across several *Billboard* charts — including the Hot 100, Hot R&B Songs and Rhythmic Airplay — with "Act ii: date @ 8," which featured Drake on the remix. "We preach artist development at The Vision, and young artists who blow up fast don't usually understand that process," Milano says. "So it's important to not only sign talented artists, but someone who's willing to listen and wants to learn."

Milano (left) and 4Batz

Haley Evans

AGE **27**
COMPANY **Mega House**
KEY CLIENTS **Peter Fenn, Casey Smith, Caroline Pennell, Mon Rovia**

While attending the University of California, Los Angeles, Evans spent Friday nights working at Ricky Reed's Nice Life studio. "[I] became incredibly inspired by the way Ricky built intricate worlds with the artists he worked with while simultaneously building his own businesses," Evans says. She continued to "learn from the best," including Mega House co-founders David Silberstein and Jeremy Levin, who hired her in 2020. In March 2024, Evans was promoted to president as her client Peter Fenn celebrated the success of Myles Smith's "Stargazing," which hit No. 1 on the Rock & Alternative Airplay chart in December. "With new artists breaking online every day, the biggest challenge for songwriter-producer managers is helping guide clients to choose the right projects to focus their time and energy on," she says. "Other than that, it's getting our clients fairly compensated for their work — songwriters especially."

Evans (left) and Fenn

Hayley Corbett

AGE **28**
COMPANY **Punchbowl Entertainment**
KEY CLIENTS **Megan Moroney, Kristian Bush**

At 15, Corbett started working with the Grammy Foundation as a volunteer, "networking as much as possible in New York and L.A., which is where I first became aware of artist management as a career," she says. That commitment more than prepared her for Megan Moroney's takeoff, which in 2024 included opening stadiums for Kenny Chesney and winning the Academy of Country Music Award for best new female artist of the year and the Country Music Association Award for new artist of the year. "One key to managing effectively is being intuitive to your clients' needs, wants and dreams while being able to implement strategy that allows for continued growth," Corbett says. "The biggest challenge for managers is avoiding burnout and oversaturation."

Epstein (left) and Bird

Jacob Epstein

AGE **34**
COMPANY **Lighthouse Management & Media**
KEY CLIENTS **H.E.R., Towa Bird, Petra Collins**

From a young age, Epstein was "obsessed" with both music and film — his management roster also includes Paul Rudd — yet as he puts it, "I knew I didn't want to be the star. I wanted to be the engine and person breaking down the doors for those artists and guiding and architecting those creative decisions." Today, he says even the smallest wins make him as proud as his artists' biggest moments, which most recently include rocker Towa Bird capping off 2024 by opening at Los Angeles' Kia Forum for Billie Eilish. "Only do this job if you truly are passionate about art and culture," he cautions. "It's too difficult if that love for it isn't there."

Holt Harmon, Parker Cohen

AGES **31, 30**
COMPANY **Metatone**
KEY CLIENTS **John Summit, Layton Giordani, Max Styler, Ranger Trucco**

After a couple of years working in the label sector of the industry, Harmon was craving a longer-term partnership with artists. Similarly, Cohen "hit a ceiling of my own" on the events side of the business. "I wanted to work on building projects from the ground up," he says. "Artist management quickly became the no-brainer to satisfy those needs." They accomplished that goal with the success of John Summit, from releasing his debut album, *Comfort in Chaos* (which peaked at No. 2 on Top Dance/Electronic Albums), to his sold-out performances at New York's Madison Square Garden and the Kia Forum in L.A. "One of the most valuable things we've learned along the way is that we are not the artist," Harmon says. "It is not our project or vision, ultimately, and instead of trying to make it ours, we've placed our focus into being the best catalysts possible for them."

From left: Harmon, Summit and Parker

MILANO: MAURICE TYRONE HOLLOWAY. EVANS: OLIVIA MCDOWELL. EPSTEIN: ALEX FLECK. HARMON, COHEN: ETHAN GARLAND.

Burns (left) and Boone

Jeff Burns

AGE **35**
COMPANY **Reynolds MGMT**
KEY CLIENT **Benson Boone**

For Burns, the best part of Benson Boone's breakout year has been "watching [him] love his career... He's funnier, can sing and backflip better, is nicer and more humble than everyone — he has it all." Such assets have helped Boone score a No. 2 hit on the Hot 100 with "Beautiful Things" and a Grammy nod for best new artist. For Burns, it's all about not getting lost in the "million little things" and focusing on what matters most: "making the best music, marketing it better than anyone else, doing the best shows and staying happy and healthy."

Justin Greenberg, Joe Izzi

AGES **32, 38**
COMPANY **Ocean Avenue**
KEY CLIENT **Addison Rae**

Three years ago, Greenberg and Izzi, along with their partner and Ocean Avenue co-founder, Sharon Jackson, left WME for management, launching with a roster that includes multihyphenate Addison Rae. Her 2024 single "Diet Pepsi" marked her major-label debut on Columbia and became her first Hot 100 entry; earlier in the year, Rae teamed with Charli xcx on a remix of "Von Dutch." Greenberg and Izzi believe having "a deep understanding of your artists' vision" is key to cutting through. "It's not about us — we're just here to make it happen."

Barbosa (middle) with Alberto Acosta (left) and Juan Javier Cantú of Grupo Frontera

Lucas Barbosa

AGE **30**
COMPANY **Habibi Management**
KEY CLIENTS **Grupo Frontera, Mora, Tommy Torres**

As a 17-year-old in Colombia, Barbosa helped an artist friend with "various tasks" before becoming his full-time manager; later, he launched his own company dedicated to producers and songwriters, who scored placements with Eladio Carrión, Maluma and Anitta. "That gave me the opportunity to expand my network," Barbosa says. Now he's helping his artists expand their fan bases, including Grupo Frontera, which toured arenas across the United States and Mexico last year. "We've taken the time as a company to build [our artists] from the ground up, ensuring that every step of the way is intentional and aligned with their artistic vision," Barbosa says.

Mariana López Crespo

AGE **27**
COMPANY **1k Dojo**
KEY CLIENTS **Young Miko, Mauro**

"To be honest, I never imagined I'd be involved as a manager in the music industry," López Crespo says. "The opportunity came from acknowledging the potential around me and gaining confidence to develop it." That combination has led to a major year for *urbano* star Young Miko, who started 2024 with her now-Grammy-nominated debut album, *att.* (which debuted at No. 9 on Top Latin Albums, her first entry on any *Billboard* albums chart), and in the spring made her Coachella debut following a sold-out U.S. tour. "However," López Crespo says, "being able to build a solid team around creatives in Puerto Rico and providing them the resources to keep developing on a bigger scale has been the biggest blessing and main reason to keep working toward success."

Young Miko (left) and López Crespo

Teddy Swims (left) and Conway

Luke Conway

AGE **29**
COMPANY **Trade Secrets MGMT**
KEY CLIENTS **Teddy Swims, Lø Spirit, Father of Peace**

"I've always wanted to be involved in music one way or another," says Conway, who spent high school in the metal and rock scenes, making merchandise for bands, directing music videos and planning DIY tours. His first management gig helped him "self-educate on every aspect of this business," which today has helped him guide Teddy Swims through his breakout year. After "Lose Control" topped the Hot 100 in March 2024, the smash hit finished at No. 1 on *Billboard*'s year-end Hot 100 Songs chart. Conway says, "This year has been a nonstop roller coaster, but everyone on the team has stepped up and delivered at a superstar level."

BURNS: KEVIN MAZUR/GETTY IMAGES. BARBOSA: PHRAA. LÓPEZ CRESPO: CHRISTOPHER POLK FOR VARIETY. CONWAY: BRYCE HALL.

Laufey (left) and Gredinger

Max Gredinger

AGE **33**

COMPANY **Foundations Artist Management**

KEY CLIENTS **Laufey, mxmtoon, rainbolt, Ricky Montgomery**

Inspired by managers Scooter Braun and Dan Weisman, Gredinger started managing acts as a high school student "and never stopped," he says. In 2023, he was named partner at Foundations, and the following year, he and Laufey experienced a string of wins — he's most proud, however, of her August performance at The Hollywood Bowl with the Los Angeles Philharmonic, which was released as a concert film in IMAX theaters worldwide. "Her ambition and goal of bringing classical and jazz music into the mainstream, and seeing that manifest in front of 17,000 people in her adopted home market and then in theaters, was unforgettable," he says.

Maytav Koter

AGE **32**

COMPANY **Good Company**

KEY CLIENTS **Hayley Gene Penner, Buddy Ross, Andrew Sarlo, Spencer Stewart**

After starting her career in publishing working for Justin Shukat at Primary Wave, Koter "discovered my passion for the songwriting community." In 2019, she launched her own company "rooted in empathy and a long-term approach… I set out to create a family." Last year, she joined client Buddy Ross at the Ivor Novello Awards, where he was nominated for his work on Fred again.. and Brian Eno's track "Enough." "I am deeply invested in [my clients'] lives beyond their careers," Koter says, "which allows for more trust and transparency in our business relationship."

From left: Stewart, Ross, Gene Penner (in front), Koter, Sarlo and producer-songwriter Mona Khoshoi

Nick Bobetsky

AGE **44**

COMPANY **State of the Art**

KEY CLIENTS **LP, Livingston, Em Beihold, Debbii Dawson (Previously: Chappell Roan)**

Bobetsky enjoyed a front-row seat for former client Chappell Roan's rise, which he calls "a huge success not just because of the size it grew to, but because of how we did it differently with strategy that isn't customary to the mainstream music business. It also helped that she's a one-of-a-kind, generational artist." After releasing her debut, *The Rise and Fall of a Midwest Princess*, in 2023, the album grew into a Billboard 200 top 10 mainstay while 2024 single "Good Luck, Babe!" became her biggest hit, climbing to No. 4 on the Hot 100 and scoring two of her six Grammy nods, for record and song of the year. Meanwhile, Dawson scored a breakout hit with "Turn the TV On" and opened on tour for Orville Peck. As Bobetsky says, "Patience is key to getting it right on an artist's own terms."

Dawson (left) and Bobetsky

Sam French

AGE **34**

COMPANY **Mixed Management**

KEY CLIENTS **Ian, Jasper Harris, bülow, Henry Kwapis**

While working in publishing at APG, French "fell in love with the process of connecting writers and producers with artists and having a front-row seat to watching big records come together." In 2022, he became a partner at Mixed and has since watched that play out time and time again. In 2024, songwriter-producer Jasper Harris worked on Camila Cabello's *C,XOXO*, Charli xcx's *brat* and more. Meanwhile, newcomer rapper Ian's "Magic Johnson," which peaked at No. 1 on the Bubbling Under Hot 100, was among the U.S. Top 10 TikTok Songs of 2024. "There's a lot of noise right now, and it's very loud," French says. "Focus on what you can control and what you believe in."

Shygirl (left) and Scardilli

Sarah (Muise) Scardilli

AGE **35**

COMPANY **Muise Management**

KEY CLIENTS **Shygirl, COBRAH**

While studying international business, Scardilli says she "spent 75% of my time partying across the U.K. and making friends with DJs and promoters." After college, she landed a job with a Bristol, England-based management firm as its first full-time employee: "I was given responsibilities very early on — jetted to Ibiza two days after my first day at work, and the rest is history." She formed Muise Management in 2019 and watched her artists reach new heights last year, as Shygirl was an opener on Charli xcx and Troye Sivan's Sweat Tour and COBRAH's "Brand New Bitch" scored a key synch in *Kinds of Kindness*. Scardilli describes the latter as "a powerful moment where underground club culture met mainstream audiences."

Stephen Timothy Nana

AGE **37**

COMPANY **n/a**

KEY CLIENT **Asake**

While Asake's third album, *Lungu Boy*, spawned the chart-topping "Active," featuring Travis Scott (which topped Billboard U.S. Afrobeats Songs), Nana considers Asake's arena tour, which included stops at London's O2 Arena and New York's Madison Square Garden, their biggest success of 2024. "Not because of output, but because of the work ethic and ability of Asake to stay focused, determined and disciplined," Nana says. "It's not every day you get creatives who have achieved so much and still be human."

GREDINGER: JUNIA LIN. KOTER: KENDRA HOPE. BOBETSKY: RUBY ANTON. SCARDILLI: COURTESY SHYGIRL.

Jennie photographed
Oct. 25, 2024, in Seoul.

Styling by Min Hee Park
Jacquemus top and AREA hat.

Dream Of Jennie

The world knows Jennie from Blackpink — but with the upcoming debut album she has long hoped for, she's finally really getting to know, and show, her true self

BY LYNDSEY HAVENS

PHOTOGRAPHED BY SONGYI YOON

JENNIE'S TO-DO LIST is growing by the minute. For the last year, the pop star has been so consumed with the launch of her own label and arrival of her highly anticipated solo debut album — plus, now, the impending reunion of Blackpink, the globally renowned K-pop quartet she is part of — that she hasn't had a moment to envision her ideal release-night party. That is, if she even has time for one.

"I like planning parties. I like creating an album," Jennie says. "It's fun, but sometimes it gets hard. I'm just trying to make sure everything is perfectly done."

Sitting on a cozy couch in a small back room of a photo studio in Seoul's Gangnam district, Jennie's post-shoot look on this late-October afternoon calls to mind *Gossip Girl* "It" mom Lily van der Woodsen after a particularly tiring day. Leaning back in matching black pants and zip-up hoodie after hours spent staring at a camera, Jennie slides on a pair of dark-lensed Gentle Monster sunglasses to give her eyes, and perhaps herself, a bit of a break. (She partnered with the eyewear brand in April 2024 on her own line, Jentle Salon.)

The 28-year-old appears at ease despite the chaos swirling around her. She's also strikingly self-aware, which seems to be both freeing and consuming for her — she knows the pursuit of perfection is exhausting and never-ending, and yet she'll settle for nothing less. Recently, this has manifested in the secrecy surrounding her upcoming album, which for the self-described "workaholic" is far from manufactured marketing mystique. Rather, it may well be a way to buy time until she feels the project she has dreamed of for so long is as close to perfect as possible — even as pressure to release it builds.

"It's not nice to be someone who's always like, 'I'm sorry, I can't say anything,' " she says of the album she began working on in early 2024 — and that the world still knows very little about. "I want to say I'm almost there," she offers. One of her biggest takeaways from the process? "I'm just going to say, 'I don't do well with time,' " she says with a laugh.

Since Jennie became a YG Entertainment trainee at 14 and a Blackpink member at 20, her career has been clearly defined and carefully handled — a meticulous approach that has yielded historic results and global fame. In 2019, Blackpink became the first K-pop girl group to perform at Coachella, and just four years later, the first Asian act to headline the festival. And the group — rounded out by Lisa, Rosé and Jisoo — made history in 2022 as the first South Korean girl group to top the Billboard 200, with its celebrated second album, *Born Pink*.

Yet that well-paved path to stardom also offered Jennie little time to explore her own creative voice. From Blackpink's 2016 debut through 2023, she released just two solo singles, both through the group's label, YG: the aptly titled Korean-English "Solo" in 2018 and the dance-pop "You & Me" in 2023, the latter of which peaked at No. 1 on the Billboard Global Excl. U.S. chart. All the while, Jennie was growing eager to piece together "the puzzle of my dreams," as she calls her solo-album-to-be. So in 2023, when Blackpink re-signed with YG for group activities and its members became free agents for the first time in their careers for solo activities, she jumped at the chance.

"While I was on my last Blackpink tour [it wrapped in 2023], I couldn't stop myself from starting to plan ahead. I'm just like that," she says. "I listed out the things that I want in my life and started pinpointing, or prioritizing, what's my very next step. And instantly, I was like, 'I still haven't accomplished the dream of releasing a solo album.' I wanted to satisfy myself by achieving that goal."

With a clear runway, she set out to do just that. In December 2023, she announced her own independent label, OddAtelier (commonly referred to as OA). At the start of 2024, she began her "album journey" in Los Angeles, where she says she worked on "99%" of the project, whose title has yet to be unveiled. By September, she announced a partnership with Columbia Records, and in October, she released the album's fierce and sassy lead single, "Mantra," which peaked at Nos. 2 and 3 on the Billboard Global Excl. U.S. and Billboard Global 200 charts, respectively.

"It's been a long process because American artists, they usually take a few years to make one album, but we have time limitations because [this year] she's got to go back into Blackpink activities again," says Alison Chang, OA's head of global business and self-described "right hand." "She really wanted to show her artistry through this album, and in the beginning, we were meeting producers and writers who she didn't really match with. I think finding her sound throughout this process was kind of hard, and landing with 'Mantra,' that took a very long time. Just finding that first perfect single to let the world know this is the start of her solo career."

And while Jennie's years as a trainee prepared her for nearly every aspect of stardom, nothing could have braced her for the pressure and responsibility that comes with being truly in charge.

"The thing is, even back in the [trainee] days, I was never OK with what other people approved. I would check on every single team like, 'Can I look at other options?' " she recalls. "So I am used to the process, but it's more of a mental thing. The idea of 'you're on your own, make the right decision.' And sometimes that's the scariest feeling. Sometimes I wake up like, 'I don't want this overwhelming control.' "

"J**UST TOUCHED DOWN** in L.A.," Jennie sings on "Mantra," later noting, "We'll be 20 minutes late 'cause we had to do an In-N-Out drive-by" — and days after its release, she found herself back in town.

She was there to perform the playful pop hit on *Jimmy Kimmel Live!* — her solo U.S. TV debut — and it was the first time in a long time she had seen her fans, who gathered en masse for the appearance. "Mantra" "was a good start for her because it [showed the] things people still expect from Jennie — she's dancing and she's singing and rapping at the same time," Columbia vp of A&R Nicole Kim says.

Later that night, it was Jennie's turn to be a fan: She attended Charli xcx and Troye Sivan's Sweat Tour and snapped pics with Charli, Sivan and her pal and *The Idol* co-star Lily-Rose Depp. Jennie made her TV acting debut on the shocking 2023 drama about an aspiring pop star (Depp) and her controversial relationship with a producer (The Weeknd); Jennie's collaborative single with Depp and The Weeknd, "One of the Girls," became her first appearance on the Hot 100 under her own name.

Jennie feels "more freedom" in L.A. compared with her native Seoul, saying, "I could definitely go out and

Juun.J top, Retrofete shorts, ASH shoes and OMEGA watches.

eat whenever I want to, wherever I want to," but adds that the biggest difference between the two cities is who surrounds her. "I learn a lot from people [in L.A.]. It's a great environment, especially for people in music, to meet people that can inspire you." (She was back in November for Tyler, The Creator's Camp Flog Gnaw Carnival, where she made a surprise appearance during Matt Champion's set to perform their 2024 collaboration, "Slow Motion," and posed with Doechii backstage. In April, she'll return to California to make her solo debut at Coachella.)

It's why, Jennie says, recording most of her album in L.A. was "very intentionally done. I just really wanted to throw myself out there to experience it. [In Seoul], I was so comforted in an easy environment that I created a long time ago, and I didn't enjoy it. I was like, 'No, if this is your career and if this is your life, explore and learn.' I kept telling myself that."

Jennie had worked with just one producer, acclaimed K-pop veteran Teddy Park, prior to her debut album — so when it came time to build a new creative network in a new city, she says the process was "rough."

"I struggled a lot in the beginning," she admits. "A few months, I would say, was just me throwing myself out there, walking into rooms filled with new people. I just had to keep knocking on the door, like, 'Is this it?' 'Is this it?' and then eventually, we got to a point where I found a good group of people that I linked with, sonically and as friends." ("Mantra" was co-written by songwriters affiliated with management, recording and publishing company Electric Feel such as Billy Walsh, Jumpa and Claudia Valentina, among others, and was mostly produced by El Guincho, known for his work with Rosalía and Camila Cabello, among other left-of-center pop girls.)

Jennie spent six years as a YG trainee before being placed in a group — the longest of any of Blackpink's members — and while working on her solo album, she reflected on those early days, especially her individual tastes. Back then, she had time to listen to "so much music," she recalls. "I can't explain how much that helped in terms of the beginning era of making this album. I never really had a chance to look back at myself [during Blackpink's rise], so [this process] was a time to really be like, 'What was I interested in back then?' Those times played a big role to get it started."

So did her childhood. Born in South Korea as Jennie Kim, she recalls her mother playing a lot of '90s pop music, which she says was "rare" for anyone living in Korea at the time. "She had a big passion for Western culture, too," Jennie says. "She would be playing Norah Jones and Backstreet Boys ... Naturally, I was drawn to R&B and, of course, Korea is known for its K-pop culture. So that was also very familiar. I was just always into the idea of music." (Jennie says she and her mom still "live super close to each other," allowing them to see each other often.)

From a young age, Jennie also craved independence. Following a vacation when she was 10 with her mom to Auckland, New Zealand, Jennie spent the next five years there attending school and participating in a homestay with a Korean family. That's primarily where she learned English and where she ideated her alter ego of Ruby-Jane, inspired by the desire for a middle name like her new friends all had. "I feel like I am great at creating different characters within myself," she says. "I like that about me."

These characters, it seems, all come to play on her upcoming debut (along with a few features she's hesitant to share more on just yet). "I intend to complete myself as Jennie Ruby-Jane, for that to be a whole person, in a way," she reveals. "You'll definitely know what I mean once the album drops, but because I'm playing with a lot of different genres and elements — I'm rapping here, I'm singing here, I'm harmonizing here, I'm talking here ... The overall sound was me making sure I like every single [song]. I didn't want to be forced into putting a song onto my album — that's what I really fought for. And I was lucky to have all these people believe in me and support me so I could get to a level where we were like, 'Wow. I think we're ready.' "

WHEN IT CAME TO her new label, Jennie knew what she wanted in a name: something that looked and sounded pretty, that represented herself and her team — but that wasn't so specific it would box them in. "I wanted it to be [a name that signifies] we're open to do anything," she says. "I didn't want anyone to label what we were." OddAtelier, named for the French word for a collaborative workshop or studio, "just made sense," she says. "Atelier is a place where we create art."

Alexander McQueen coat,
David Koma top and
Coperni bottoms.

Markgong top

Jacquemus dress

Still, soon after deciding to launch it in late 2023, Jennie took a look at herself in the mirror and thought, " 'Do you realize the choice that you've made?' It was really an all-or-nothing situation," she says. "I didn't one day decide I want to make a label for myself. For me, building the relationship with my team, we started dreaming together, naturally. Because a lot of them I've worked with for a long time. So when we had a chance to go our individual way, I thought that would be like six years in the future. I didn't think it would be so soon. So I got the courage to start my independence in life, and every step of the way has been a learning process for me. I'm studying this whole new world. Now that it's been a year, I can say I'm glad I was brave enough to have started this label. I couldn't be more proud."

As for whether she plans to sign other artists to OA, her response makes clear how overwhelming a moment this is: "I've been getting this question left and right, and my answer is '*Please*, I am so busy on this album. Let's not even get my brain on that path just yet,' " she says while laughing through a polite sigh.

Chang, OA's global head of business, met Jennie in 2019, when she was working with YG Entertainment USA handling licensing, merchandising and intellectual property for acts including Blackpink. The two "just hit it off," Chang says. "We formed this bond, and then from there, we just saw each other every day, and it evolved into managing her stuff along with Blackpink. We went on tour together, and then [in 2023], she was like, 'Hey, I want to create OA.'

"From the day I met her, I just knew, 'Wow, this girl is so smart,' " Chang continues. "She knows what she wants. She's ambitious. Our standards for each other are so high. As a solo artist, she's able to spread her wings a bit more and have more authority over her creative direction and strategy for how she wants to develop into an even bigger global artist."

The hope is that Jennie will become the Korean pop star to represent the Asian music market — a bit like Bad Bunny does the Spanish-language one. But she and her team couldn't conquer the world on their own. Chang knew that if the goal was to break even wider in the United States, they would need more resources and experience. "It was just a given," she says. "We needed to partner with an American label."

She and Jennie took "a lot" of label meetings in late 2023, but ultimately signed with Columbia for its "proactiveness" and how much the team they met had researched Jennie ahead of time. "Jennie values her roots and heritage more than anyone else, and while she does want to establish herself as a global artist, including in the U.S. market, she also deeply cares about her base and wants to make them proud," says Kim, who worked at HYBE with acts including BTS prior to joining Columbia. "And I think our team is working really hard to support her in achieving that." (For additional support, Jeremy Erlich will co-manage alongside OA; as Interscope's executive vp of business development in the late 2010s, he helped facilitate the conversations between the label and YG that ultimately led to their global partnership and Blackpink signing with Interscope.)

But as the web around Jennie spreads, she remains firmly at its center — and is intent on calling the shots. Jennie attributes that to the woman she calls the "No. 1 boss lady": her mom. "I don't even have to look anywhere else. She's taught me how to be a woman, how to be a boss, how to be myself. She's my idol," she gushes.

While coming up in Blackpink, Jennie says she had to learn how to compromise; with her own album, the only person she has to do that with is herself. "It's a fight between me, myself and I — I'm not easy to convince," she says. "It's not easy working with me." And that's why Jennie craved this experience: It forced her to look into a metaphorical mirror.

"I needed this. I wanted this," she says, her tone growing more confident. "The more I get to know myself, the more I try to love myself. I've had a time in my life where I didn't — I had no clue how to do that. I didn't know who I was. I didn't know what I was living for. The time where I was feeling clueless. The fact that I've moved on from that phase and being so committed to myself, I'm very proud.

> *"I needed this. I wanted this.*
> **The more I get to know myself, the more I try to love myself. I've had a time in my life when I didn't ... The fact that I've moved on from that phase and being so committed to myself, I'm so proud."**
> **—JENNIE**

"It's so easy to lose yourself, which is OK," she continues. "There was also a time where I was feeling lost about 'K-pop,' 'pop music,' all these labels that I was chasing after ... Now that I look back, I just want to tell myself, 'Maybe enjoy it a little, feeling lost in the struggle, because there will be a time where you don't even have time to think you're lost.' "

BLACKPINK'S GROUP CHAT IS ID'd with a simple yet fitting emoji: a family of four. Jennie says her groupmates check in there as often as they can.

"We are all so caught up with life. Obviously, we can't be calling each other every day," she says. "Even though we know we can't see each other so much, it doesn't really feel any different than all the other years because we know we're here for each other. They're literally a phone call away. And at this point, we respect each other's space so much. So if there's anything to be happy for, to celebrate, we're all in it together."

For the group's dedicated Blinks, Blackpink's 2025 reunion, which will include new music and a tour — and follows Rosé's just-released solo album, a forthcoming album and a role on *The White Lotus* for Lisa and an acting gig on a forthcoming K-drama and a Dior campaign for Jisoo — is indeed cause for celebration. "I've missed the girls. I've missed doing tours with them. I miss our silly moments," Jennie says. "I'm excited to see what everyone brings. You know, everyone took their own journey [during] this time, and I'm excited to share that with the girls. I want to say it's going to be the most powerful [versions] of ourselves that anyone has seen."

As Blackpink's members continue to grow, Chang says the best part of her front-row seat to Jennie's journey has been seeing her evolution. "People don't really know, but she's a very shy, introverted person," she says, "and seeing her throughout this whole process, I'm just really in awe of how much she's grown. She put her heart into this." As Kim recalls, while Jennie was recording her album, there were periods when she would be in sessions every day until six or seven the next morning: "It was surprising to me that she wanted to stay longer and write more. She was really, really passionate. It was inspiring for me to see her working so hard in the studio."

Most of Jennie's album, as a result, is rooted in deeply personal songwriting about "what I've experienced, what I resonate to or what I want in my life. That's one other thing that's changed from being in Blackpink, is that I get to say my message in my way."

And with so much time to reflect — both in and out of the studio — parts of Jennie's life came into focus for the first time, including the realization that *this is her life*. Given her fluctuating schedule, she says her body often struggles to catch up or get into a rhythm, but over time, she has become better at prioritizing self-care. Her ideal day off ("Which is rare," she says) includes morning coffee or tea, Pilates, a sauna or bath, dinner with friends and organizing her home. "That's healing for me," she says.

Understandably, she was thinking of such things while getting her hair and makeup done earlier today as she prepared for her *Billboard* shoot, and they inspired a thought that she shared with her team. "I said if I ever had a chance to tell people that are in their teenage [years] that look up to this job or this world, all I can say from experience is, 'This is your life — and you have a whole lifetime to live.' Not the next 10 years, not the next three years. It's amazing to chase after your dream, but don't forget to live."

For now, Jennie is taking her own advice. When asked if her solo debut is the start of a continued solo career, her answer is succinct: "Let's not put pressure on me. I want to live my present for now, and then let me ease myself into the next thing."

Has she ever done that before?

"Oh, definitely not," she says. "Every day has made me into who I am right now." ■

HAIR BY SIN GABE. MAKEUP BY LEE SOL. CREATIVE DIRECTION BY WOO LEE. CONTENT EDITORS: SUNYOUNG KO, EUNBO SHIM AND YOUNG SHIN.

GENRE NOW

IT'S HARDER THAN EVER FOR A NEW ARTIST TO BREAK OUT, BUT THESE YOUNG STARS ARE PUSHING THEIR SOUNDS FORWARD — AND CREATING NEW ONES

BigXthaPlug

THE BOOMING VOICE IN RAP WITH SOMETHING TO SAY

Billboard Hot 100 hits and Coachella sets were never part of BigXthaPlug's plans for himself. Growing up in Dallas, the 26-year-old with the deep, bellowing voice had gridiron dreams of playing in the NFL — and even at his *Billboard* photo shoot, he throws a football around and speaks of his success in the game's terms.

BigX compares his industry journey to that of former quarterback Cam Newton, who starred at a junior college before becoming a Heisman Trophy winner at Auburn University and, eventually, an NFL MVP. "I basically just pulled a Cam Newton," he states. "Instead of going through all the steps, I just went crazy at that [junior college] and could've damn near went to the league."

To rap fans, BigX's story — his path from drug dealer to artist — isn't foreign. "Pops" — the 6-foot-7 man with a massive frame just like BigX's, who's with his son in Los Angeles today — "had a trap house, and in the middle of that spot was a round wooden table and a mic," BigX recalls of his first time in front of a microphone. "[Pops] was like, 'Y'all n—s can't rap. My son got more than y'all got.' I was scoring on 'em, and I guess it was sounding good. He was like, 'You good. You need to rap for real.' "

Four years ago, BigX signed with UnitedMasters, which he still calls the "best thing I could've did." He credits his first manager — an uncle who essentially ran off after BigX paid him $20,000 upfront — for steering him toward maintaining his independence with the distributor.

BigX has stood out among hip-hop's melodic-leaning mainstream with his soulful production and booming chopped-and-screwed flows that have drawn comparisons to The Notorious B.I.G. — and the past 12 months have been particularly crucial in his ascent. He earned his first Hot 100 entry in December 2023 when the groovy "Mmhmm" reached No. 63. In October, he opened up about his insecurities, pain and triumphs on his second album, *Take Care*, which reached No. 8 on the Billboard 200.

"I feel like for the past decade it's been a lot of mumble rap. People not talking about nothing," he says. "I'm talking about something. A lot of the older people who love music, that's what they grew up on — actual substance. Here's this young dude that sound old, but he on these young-old beats. I literally mixed everything up so everybody could love it."

BigX's in-house producer, Tony Coles, adds, "He has this sort of Martin Luther King Jr. element to him where it's [a] preacher almost and his voice is very powerful, and you got the badass production behind it."

Next up, BigX — who Shaboozey tapped for a feature on his 2024 album, *Where I've Been, Isn't Where I'm Going* — will connect with his Texas roots for a country mixtape slated to arrive in 2025 and feature a star-studded guest lineup including Jelly Roll, Morgan Wallen, Luke Combs and Post Malone. "Post Malone, Luke Combs, all those guys," BigX says. "They claim I'm their favorite rapper." —MICHAEL SAPONARA

PHOTOGRAPHED BY RAYMOND ALVA

BigXthaPlug photographed Dec. 4, 2024,
at Electric Pony Studios in Los Angeles.

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Zach Top

CRAFTING COUNTRY'S FUTURE, ROOTS UP

Top photographed Dec. 2, 2024, in Franklin, Tenn.

The future of country music has an old-school sound. Newcomer Zach Top is leading a neo-traditional revival thanks to his debut album, 2024's *Cold Beer & Country Music*, which brims with his distinct twang and songs inspired by country music that was popular three and four decades ago.

Growing up in Sunnyside, Wash., Top soaked in the songs of artists like Keith Whitley and George Strait and immersed himself in bluegrass and old-time country during his guitar lessons. Top and his siblings launched a family bluegrass band, and he later began playing with a Seattle-based bluegrass group — but his heart was always in country music. Producer, writer and tour manager Carson Chamberlain, known for his work with Whitley and Alan Jackson, reached out after he saw one of the videos Top had posted of himself on Facebook. By the time he moved to Nashville in 2021, Top had begun co-writing with Chamberlain and other songwriting luminaries, "guys that wrote the hits that I grew up on and that made me love country music," he says.

"One of my favorite parts of the process of making music is getting to create it yourself," the 27-year-old Top explains. "It makes a little more of an intimate connection with the song when it's coming from something you lived and you make something universal out of it."

Those writing and recording sessions became *Cold Beer & Country Music*, which includes Top's breakthrough songs such as "Bad Luck" and the '90s country throwback "Sounds Like the Radio," which reached the top 20 on *Billboard*'s Country Airplay chart. The album also featured "I Never Lie," which became his Billboard Hot 100 debut and also reached the Hot Country Songs top 10. Top scored a Country Music Association Awards nomination for new artist of the year, spent much of 2024 on the road opening for Lainey Wilson and will be direct support for Jackson's Last Call: One More for the Road Tour in 2025, along with headlining his own tour. But even as Top looks to the future, he says what makes great country music remains timeless.

"Three chords and the truth are necessary. A fiddle and steel guitar never hurt. But it's songs that make people feel something and something that's got a story to it. That's what I love about country music — songs that make me feel understood, no matter what stage of life I'm in."

—JESSICA NICHOLSON

PHOTOGRAPHED BY DIANA KING

JANUARY 25, 2025

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ISSUE DATE 1/25 | **AD CLOSE** 1/14 | **MATERIALS DUE** 1/12

GENRE NOW

Xavi

THE YOUNG LATIN STAR COOKING UP NEW SOUNDS

Xavi photographed Dec. 3, 2024, in Los Angeles.

PHOTOGRAPHED BY JENNIFER McCORD

The night of Oct. 20, 2024, was full of firsts for Xavi. The 20-year-old Mexican American singer-songwriter gave his first televised performance of his breakout hit, "La Diabla," at the Billboard Latin Music Awards, where he also won his first trophy, for artist of the year, new. And this occurred just eight days after he released his celebrated debut album, *Next*, which became his first top 10 on any albums chart.

"I'm still processing it," Xavi says today. "It's something that I didn't really expect, but it's a blessing. My grandpa and my whole family would always talk about this type of stuff; it was their dream to make it in the music industry. I'm really trying to push their dreams forward."

It was a fitting, and familiar, flurry of events for the young artist. After the August 2023 release of "La Víctima," "La Diabla" followed in November and took off in 2024, helping maintain Xavi's momentum and quickly establishing him as one to watch.

"La Diabla" has since tied for the second-longest-reigning title of the year on the Hot Latin Songs chart, dominating for 14 weeks. ("La Víctima," Xavi's first chart entry, peaked at No. 2.) By the end of 2024, Xavi had placed nine songs on the tally while *Next* debuted at Nos. 6 and 9 on the Regional Mexican Albums and Top Latin Albums charts, respectively. But Xavi's greatest accomplishment in a year of many is the spread of his hybrid subgenre: *tumbados románticos*.

With his pioneering blend of the musicality of *corridos tumbados* with the melodies of sad *sierreño*, Xavi has paved a clear path for himself to explore other genres, too. Growing up between Sonora, Mexico, and Phoenix, his mother would wake him up with music by Vicente Fernández and Selena, but he says coming to the United States was "a whole different world" and he quickly became a fan of artists like Justin Bieber and Daniel Caesar. Now he's eager to explore all kinds of sounds — sometimes simultaneously.

"We're talking about R&B, we're talking about *música mexicana*. When you get all those elements and put them into one, it literally becomes its own — it brings out this new sound," he says. "Since it's something new and we're getting to the bottom of it, it's done with so much love and patience. We do it with a lot of passion.

"The studio is a kitchen, you know?" he continues. "And we've just been working on the sound of the fusion because there's a lot of styles out there. But what happens when you put two, or three, or four or five genres into one song? It's a fusion of corridos — I don't want to say we invented it, but we definitely brought something new." —LYNDSEY HAVENS

Flawed Mangoes

HIS LOW-KEY “HOPECORE” INSPIRES CONTENT KINGS

When Evan Lo walked onto an in-progress livestream by Kai Cenat, the Twitch juggernaut with some 15.8 million followers, and his influencer pal Fanum on Nov. 16, 2024, they received the guitar-wielding stranger with a friendly, split-second greeting. But when he began strumming the vibey opening chords of his viral track “Swimming,” the streamers halted. A look of starstruck bliss crossed Fanum’s face, while Cenat — after a quick online search to confirm his guest’s identity — began screaming: “Oh, my gosh! It’s him! Yo, you a GOAT!”

The GOAT in question is better known as Flawed Mangoes, a Boston-based musician whose gently expressive guitar work and mesmerizing, ambient loops have soundtracked a slew of content creators’ motivational speeches and uplifting memes. Dubbed “hopecore,” this positivity-focused music has gained traction as a tonic to social media’s often toxic offerings — and based on his comment sections, Flawed Mangoes has helped many a bro tap into their sensitive side. Sure enough, before Lo left the livestream, he played that comfort-food instrumental while another guest, the Chicago rapper G Herbo, gave an inspirational speech — and Herbo’s young son was left wiping away tears.

“It was so chaotic,” Lo says, chuckling. “Like, ‘Am I overwhelming this kid right now?’ But watching the video [later], it was a wholesome thing ... It’s very surreal to think that people are actually having significant moments [with my music].”

Despite being a naturally “introverted, shy person,” the thoughtful, easy-going Lo is quietly embracing his status as hopecore’s de facto poster boy. “In my head, it was never ‘I want this to be motivational and inspiring,’ ” he says. “[My music is] toeing the line between melancholy and happy in that bittersweet sort of way. I guess a lot of people identified with both sides.” In his estimation, a Flawed Mangoes fan is someone looking to “slow down and take time” for personal wellness: “I think people who can relate to needing that sort of energy in their life tend to gravitate toward my music.”

After signing with APG Music in April and releasing EP *The Unwavering Hand* in September, the 27-year-old is getting more comfortable showing his face to the world. He’s even preparing to spotlight his own vocals on an upcoming album in 2025, though he’s quick to manage expectations. “What inspires me the most is hearing singers who clearly aren’t very good at singing but do it anyway and really commit. Their lack of formal singing training becomes a character of the music itself. That’s really inspiring to me as someone who’s a very mid singer,” he adds with a sheepish smile. —JOE LYNCH

Flawed Mangoes photographed Dec. 5, 2024, in New York.

PHOTOGRAPHED BY JUSTIN J WEE

billboard

2025

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ISSUE

Billboard will publish its second Sports & Music issue on Feb. 8, 2025.

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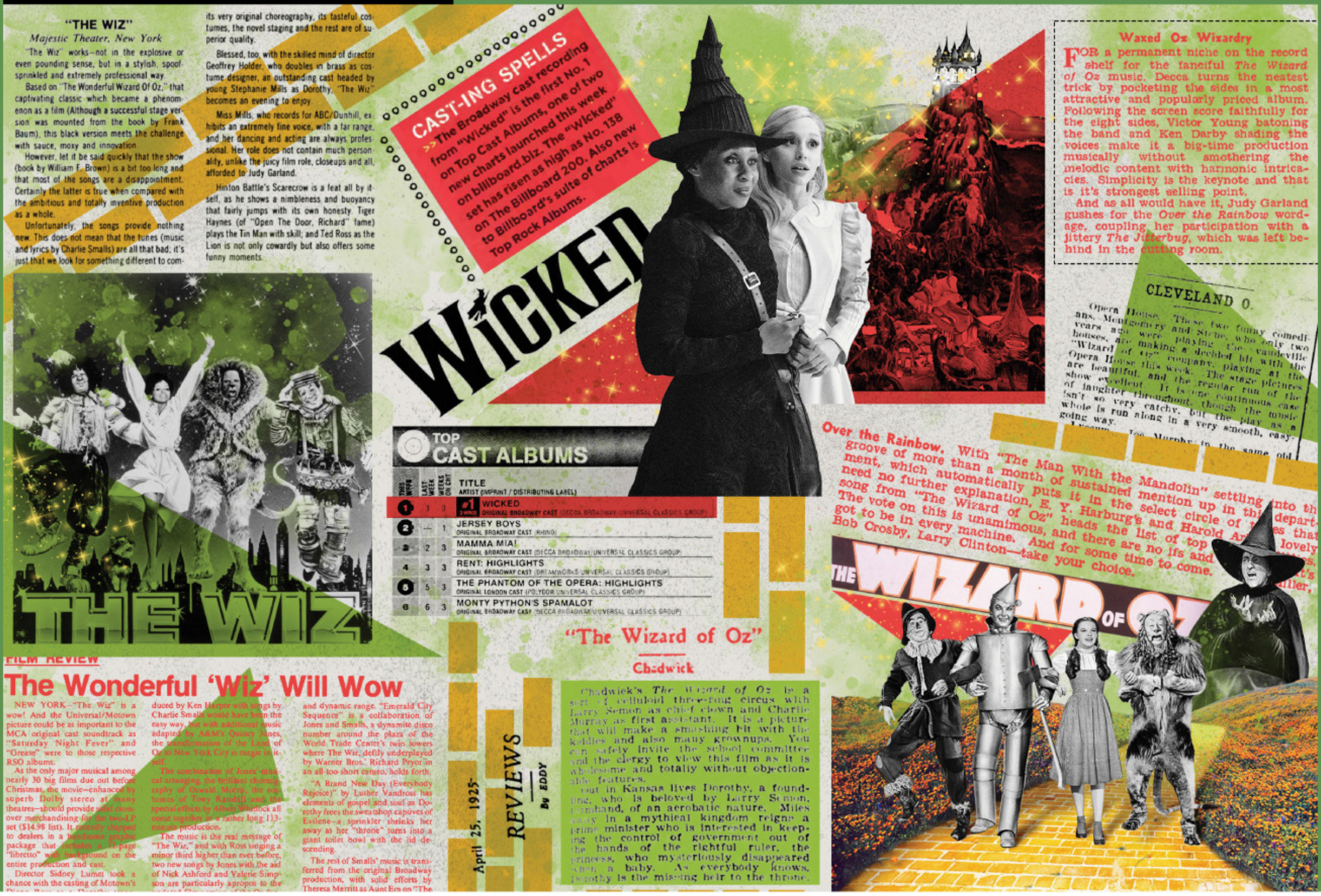

"THE WIZ"

Majestic Theater, New York

"The Wiz" works—not in the explosive or even pounding sense, but in a stylish, spoof-sprinkled and extremely professional way.

Based on "The Wonderful Wizard Of Oz," that captivating classic which became a phenomenon as a film (Although a successful stage version was mounted from the book by Frank Baum), this black version meets the challenge with sauce, moxy and innovation.

However, let it be said quickly that the show (book by William F. Brown) is a bit too long and that most of the songs are a disappointment. Certainly the latter is true when compared with the ambitious and totally inventive production as a whole.

Unfortunately, the songs provide nothing new. This does not mean that the tunes (music and lyrics by Charlie Smalls) are all that bad; it's just that we look for something different to com-

its very original choreography, its tasteful costumes, the novel staging and the rest are of superior quality.

Blessed, too, with the skilled mind of director Geoffrey Holder, who doubles in brass as costume designer, an outstanding cast headed by young Stephanie Mills as Dorothy, "The Wiz" becomes an evening to enjoy.

Miss Mills, who records for ABC/Dunhill, exhibits an extremely fine voice, with a far range, and her dancing and acting are always professional. Her role does not contain much personality, unlike the juicy film role, closeups and all, afforded to Judy Garland.

Hinton Battle's Scarecrow is a feat all by itself, as he shows a nimbleness and buoyancy that fairly jumps with its own honesty. Tiger Haynes (of "Open The Door, Richard" fame) plays the Tin Man with skill; and Ted Ross as the Lion is not only cowardly but also offers some funny moments.

CAST-ING SPELLS

>> The Broadway cast recording from "Wicked" is the first No. 1 on Top Cast Albums, one of two new charts launched this week on billboard.biz. The "Wicked" set has risen as high as No. 138 on The Billboard 200. Also new to Billboard's suite of charts is Top Rock Albums.

Waxed Oz Wizardry

FOR a permanent niche on the record shelf for the fanciful *The Wizard of Oz* music, Decca turns the neatest trick by pocketing the sides in a most attractive and popularly priced album. Following the screen score faithfully for the eight sides, Victor Young batoning the band and Ken Darby shading the voices make it a big-time production musically without smothering the melodic content with harmonic intricacies. Simplicity is the keynote and that is it's strongest selling point.

And as all would have it, Judy Garland gushes for the *Over the Rainbow* wordage, coupling her participation with a jittery *The Jitterbug*, which was left behind in the cutting room.

CLEVELAND O.

Opera House. These two funny comedians, Montgomery and Stone, who only two years ago were playing the vaudeville houses, are making a decided hit with the "Wizard of Oz" company, playing at the Opera House this week. The stage pictures are beautiful, and the regular run of the show excellent. It is one continuous case of laughter throughout, though the music isn't so very catchy, but the play as a whole is run along in a very smooth, easy-going way.

Lyceum. Joe Murphy in the same old

TOP CAST ALBUMS

THIS WEEK	LAST WEEK	WEEKS ON CHT	TITLE ARTIST (IMPRINT / DISTRIBUTING LABEL)
1	1	3	#1 3 WKS WICKED ORIGINAL BROADWAY CAST (DECCA BROADWAY/UNIVERSAL CLASSICS GROUP)
2	—	1	JERSEY BOYS ORIGINAL BROADWAY CAST (RHINO)
3	2	3	MAMMA MIA! ORIGINAL BROADWAY CAST (DECCA BROADWAY/UNIVERSAL CLASSICS GROUP)
4	3	3	RENT: HIGHLIGHTS ORIGINAL BROADWAY CAST (DREAMWORKS/UNIVERSAL CLASSICS GROUP)
5	5	3	THE PHANTOM OF THE OPERA: HIGHLIGHTS ORIGINAL LONDON CAST (POLYDOR/UNIVERSAL CLASSICS GROUP)
6	6	3	MONTY PYTHON'S SPAMALOT ORIGINAL BROADWAY CAST (DECCA BROADWAY/UNIVERSAL CLASSICS GROUP)

Over the Rainbow. With "The Man With the Mandolin" settling into th groove of more than a month of sustained mention up in thi depart-ment, which automatically puts it in the select circle of t es that need no further explanation, E. Y. Harburg's and Harold Ar lovely song from "The Wizard of Oz" heads the list of top The vote on this is unamimous, and there are no ifs and got to be in every machine. And for some time to come. Bob Crosby, Larry Clinton—take your choice.

"The Wizard of Oz"

Chadwick

Chadwick's *The Wizard of Oz* is a sort of celluloid three-ring circus with Larry Semon as chief clown and Charlie Murray as first assistant. It is a picture that will make a smashing hit with the kiddies and also many grownups. You can safely invite the school committee and the clergy to view this film as it is wholesome and totally without objectionable features.

Out in Kansas lives Dorothy, a foundling, who is beloved by Larry Semon, farmhand, of an acrobatic nature. Miles away in a mythical kingdom reigns a prime minister who is interested in keeping the control of government out of the hands of the rightful ruler, the princess, who mysteriously disappeared when a baby. As everybody knows, Dorothy is the missing heir to the throne.

FILM REVIEW

The Wonderful 'Wiz' Will Wow

NEW YORK—"The Wiz" is a wow! And the Universal/Motown picture could be as important to the MCA original cast soundtrack as "Saturday Night Fever" and "Grease" were to those respective RSO albums.

As the only major musical among nearly 30 big films due out before Christmas, the movie—enhanced by superb Dolby stereo at many theatres—should provide solid crossover merchandising for the two-LP set ($14.98 list). It recently shipped to dealers in a handsome graphic package that includes a 12-page "libretto" with background on the entire production and cast.

Director Sidney Lumet took a chance with the casting of Motown's

duced by Ken Harper with songs by Charlie Smalls would have been the easy way, but with additional music adapted by A&M's Quincy Jones, the transformation of the Land of Oz to New York City is magic in itself.

The combination of Jones' musical arranging, the brilliant choreography of Oswald Morris, the costumes of Tony Randall and the special effects by Albert Whitlock all come together in a rather long 113-minute production.

The music is the real message of "The Wiz," and with Ross singing a minor third higher than ever before, two new songs by Jones with the aid of Nick Ashford and Valerie Simpson are particularly apropos to the

and dynamic range. "Emerald City Sequence" is a collaboration of Jones and Smalls, a dynamite disco number around the plaza of the World Trade Center's twin towers where The Wiz, deftly underplayed by Warner Bros.' Richard Pryor in an all-too-short cameo, holds forth.

"A Brand New Day (Everybody Rejoice)" by Luther Vandross has elements of gospel and soul as Dorothy frees the sweatshop captives of Evilene—a sprinkler shrinks her away as her "throne" turns into a giant toilet bowl with the lid descending.

The rest of Smalls' music is transferred from the original Broadway production, with solid efforts by Theresa Merritt as Aunt Em on "The

FROM *WIZARD* TO *WICKED*

Few American-made mythologies loom larger than L. Frank Baum's Oz. His 1900 book, *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*, was an instant sensation that was made into theatrical productions and films, and later inspired songs by Elton John, America, ELO and even the Melvins. Now, Jon M. Chu's blockbuster *Wicked* is taking audiences beyond the yellow brick road, thanks to bewitching performances by Ariana Grande and Cynthia Erivo. So put on your emerald-colored glasses for a look back at *Billboard*'s coverage of a story that transported people over the rainbow to another world.

NOT IN KANSAS ANYMORE

Just two years after Baum published his book, a musical adaptation, *The Wizard of Oz*, opened in a Chicago theater. Thanks to vaudeville veterans Fred Stone and David C. Montgomery playing the Scarecrow and Tin Woodman, respectively, the Jan. 3, 1903, *Billboard* raved, "It is one continuous case of laughter throughout." The reviewer noted, however, that "the music isn't so very catchy." If they only had a Rodgers & Hart!

IF THEY ONLY HAD A BRAIN

When the sixth silent film based on Oz opened in 1925, a *Billboard* critic wasn't convinced it was King of the Forest. "No one ever expects logic in a film of this species and certainly no one finds any in *The Wizard of Oz*," wrote a reviewer in the April 25 issue of director Larry Semon's slapstick take. The good news: "You can safely invite the school committee and the clergy to view this film as it is wholesome and totally without objectionable features."

'WHAT HAPPENED NEXT WAS RICH'

When MGM's lush *The Wizard of Oz* premiered in New York, *Billboard* was there — as was star actress Judy Garland, who sang a few songs after the screening with frequent co-star Mickey Rooney. The "vaudefilmers" combo grossed $68,000 and broke "all house records," according to the Sept. 2, 1939, issue. Two weeks later, *Billboard* forecast a bright future for "Over the Rainbow": "You can count on its staying around for some time." By Sept. 30, the song was a jukebox must: "No ifs and buts to it — it's got to be in every machine."

NO PLACE LIKE HARLEM

When *The Wiz*, a stage musical reimagining with an all-Black cast, opened on Broadway in 1975, a Jan. 18 *Billboard* review hailed its "sauce, moxy and innovation." Sidney Lumet's big-screen adaptation was "a wow" but "rather long," according to the Oct. 14, 1978, issue. The same reviewer also said that Michael Jackson "excels as Scarecrow in several numbers," including "a vibrant duet" with Diana Ross on "Ease on Down the Road" — which hit No. 41 on the Billboard Hot 100 the next week.

AGE-'DEFYING' APPEAL

A full century after Oz first hit the Gay White Way, *Wicked* debuted on Broadway. It was very "Popular": When *Billboard* launched its Top Cast Albums chart in the Jan. 21, 2006, issue, the original cast recording was the first No. 1. *Wicked*'s broomstick flight to Hollywood was just as successful. "Ariana Grande is a revelation," praised a Nov. 22, 2024, *Billboard* article, adding that Erivo's Wicked Witch "feels real and relatable — even in a musical with talking goats."

—JOE LYNCH

ILLUSTRATION BY BARBARA GIBSON

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